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ENTERED AT THE POST OFFICE AT NEW YORK, N. Y., AT SECOND CLASS MAIL RATES.

Vol. IX.

Published Every
Week.

Beadle & Adams, Publishers,
98 WILLIAM STREET, N. Y., December 8, 1880.

Ten Cents a Copy.
\$5.00 a Year.

No. 111

The Smuggler Captain; or, The Skipper's Crime.

BY NED BUNTLINE,

AUTHOR OF "THAYENDANEGBA," "THE WHITE WIZARD," "THE SEA BANDIT," "THE RED WARRIOR," ETC., ETC.



THE WRECK OF THE SMUGGLER.

The Smuggler Captain; OR, THE SKIPPER'S CRIME.

BY NED BUNTLIN,
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WIZARD," "THE RED WARRIOR," "THE
SEA BANDIT," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

Upon a lofty headland which jutted out into the ever-roaring breakers of the Northern Atlantic stood an elderly man, gazing toward the offing through a spy-glass. His long, white hair bored to the stiff breeze blew back from his high, pale brow, revealing a face with prominent features, indicating a stern and vigorous character. More than one scar on his weather-bronzed face told of past perils, too. His dress was good; but half citizen and half sailor-like in its make. A glazed tarpaulin-hat lay upon the gray rock by his side—his white linen shirt was open at the throat, and its wide collar lay back over the collar of his blue coat. A black silk cravat was carelessly knotted around his neck, its ends hanging down upon the spotless bosom of his shirt.

Upon the bleak headland where he stood, there was neither tree nor shrubbery; but a little back there was a fine grove of pines, and through this grove could be dimly seen the proportions of a handsome white house, cottage-built, but quite large when compared with the houses in a small fishing-village which lay down in a deep glen on his right, fronting a small harbor almost entirely "land-locked", and approached from the sea by a channel between the cliffs so narrow that no two vessels could enter side by side, and if square-rigged, would have to cock-bill their yards to keep them from striking the rocks.

In the little harbor a few sloops and schooners lay at anchor, all of that sharp build and rakish masting which indicate our Maine and Massachusetts fishing-craft. The houses, though small, were neat-looking, with their white walls, and green doors and window-blinds. The flower-yards in front, and vegetable-gardens in the rear, told that Yankee women lived there, quite as well as the little church with its tall steeple; and the minister's house embowered in shade-trees, and surrounded with lilacs and roses, close by, quite as well as the little red school-house, and the graveyard with its neat, white stones, with never a cross or a costly monument in it.

There are a thousand little things peculiar to a New England village, whether on the coast, or further back, which one does not see elsewhere; therefore pardon the foregoing prolixity of description.

The old gentleman, whom we opened this chapter with, after looking along the entire range of sea-view, and uttering a word of disappointment at there being no vessel in sight, closed the joints of his telescope, and was putting it in a case, when the quick step of a young man approaching from the direction of the house fell on his ear, and, clapping his hat on his head, he turned to see who was coming.

And his gray eyes brightened as he saw a well-formed though rather delicate-looking young man, handsomely dressed, hurrying toward him.

"Ethelbert, sure as life!" he said, in a joyous tone to himself. Then, as the young man came nearer, he cried:

"Home from college, my boy?"

"Yes, father," said the young man. "I have graduated with all the honors, and old Yale will not see me again, as a student, at any rate."

"I'm glad of it, boy, jolly glad. You need recreation, fresh air, and all that. Your face is a good deal whiter than that of our Rosalette, and your form is as thin as a shadow. But we'll soon find color for your cheek, and flesh for your ribs down here. Have you seen your sister?"

"Yes sir. Rosalette told me you had taken your glass and come this way, and I expected to find you here at your old look-out."

"Yes—I was looking for the 'Scud'. It is time she was back from York with a cargo. My store down in the village is low-stocked, and needs filling up, and the goods to do it are aboard of her."

"Frank Jewlet commands her—does he not?" asked the young man.

"Yes."

"I don't like that man, father. He is altogether too big for his business, and his eye looks more treacherous than the eye of a serpent."

"He's smart, boy, he's smart! I know you don't like him, nor do I believe he likes you much; but you should not let your dislikes go far without reason. He has served me faithfully for years, and I have had no fault to find with him. He makes good voyages, sure returns, and is worth all five of my other captains put together. You have nothing against him but the look you think treacherous, have you?"

"No, father. I know of no positive act of his that merits condemnation."

"Then, my boy, do not let a mere fancy make you bate the man."

"I can't help it, father. I do not like him, and shall ever avoid him. His business need not throw him and myself into contact."

"That's so, my boy, that's so. But let us go back to the house. It is lunch-time. A glass of old ale, and a bite of Stilton cheese and hard-tack will set nice on your stomach. This sea-breeze has brought some color into your cheek already."

"It is invigorating after my long confinement in a close study-room," said the young man. "I will soon be myself again, after a week or two of tumbling about in the surf, and racing through the pines."

"That you will, boy. Your boats are in good order in the boat-house, and your horse has only been out for exercise since your last vacation," said the old gentleman, as they walked back toward the cottage in the pines.

"There comes Rosalette to meet us," said Ethelbert, seeing a slight figure, clad in white, coming down the pathway among the pines.

"Yes—bless the girl! she thinks of nothing but you when you're away, and now I suppose she'll be like your shadow, with you all the time you're at home," said the old gentleman.

In a few moments her rapid footsteps brought her to them. Never were brother and sister more unlike in looks. His eyes were dark as night itself; his hair hung in black masses about his high, pale brow; his features were sharp, and of the Italian stamp; his complexion paled by study, would have been brunette, if it had its natural color. Her hair was of that rich golden brown which so becomes a roseate blonde; her eyes were blue as the sky when there is no cloud above, nor any mist between it and the earth; her figure, though perfect, was *petite*—his was tall, and with manly exercise would have been strong and muscular.

"So, Rosy, you couldn't even wait until we got back to lunch?" said the father, with a smile on his rough face.

"Ethelbert has been gone so long, father," said Rosalette.

"A whole six months; about a third of an East India voyage, my girl! But he'll not have to leave us again at present."

"At present? I hope never, father!" said the beautiful girl, who had faced about and taken an arm of each.

"Never is a long time, my girl, a long time," said the old gentleman. "Your brother will have to go out into the world, by-and-by, like others, and take his part in the duties of life. You don't think I've educated him to stay at home to escort you on your rides, and pick posies for you, do you? If I had, I would have kept a nurse and a governess for him, instead of sending him to college."

Rosalette made no reply; but her lips quivered, and her eyes looked down on the ground all the way, until they reached the handsome cottage among the pines.

CHAPTER II.

The little village of Ledgetown, which we pointed out in the first chapter, contained only one store, and that was owned by Thomas Drummond, Esq., the old gentleman with whom the story opens. "English Tom," he had been called, when he first landed in that harbor with his two little children—the one four and the other two years old—about sixteen years before the time which we open with; for he came from England, and though not a Cockney, being the only foreigner in the place then, the cognomen was given him by the dozen or two fishermen who lived in the little settlement. He had money—how much, no one ever knew; for he made no confidants, and attended strictly to his own business. He rented a small cottage, and hired an elderly woman to act as a housekeeper and nurse his motherless children, while he, purchasing one half of a fishing-schooner, went at once into the same active and perilous life which was followed by his neighbors. He was strangely fortunate. The vessel in which he sailed made short trips, and got full fares, and

soon he bought out his partner and sailed on his own account. Then a store became needful in the place, and he alone had the enterprise to stock one with such goods as were needed in that locality. Soon another and another vessel came under his ownership, until there were six registered in his name. He supplied all the vessels from the port, with stores; and, with good fortune attending all his investments, he rapidly became rich, for such a locality. He was now almost universally spoken to as Mr. Drummond; and if the name of "English Tom" was ever used by his neighbors, it was when he was not present.

At the time when we introduce him, he only kept a general supervision over his business—clerks attended to his store, and the accounts of his vessels were supervised by his chief clerk. He took matters easily, now that his fortune was made, and enjoyed the company of his daughter, who, educated by a private tutor, was reported to possess many rare accomplishments. His son, Ethelbert, now just twenty years of age, having graduated, was at home, as we have seen, to add to the old gentleman's pleasure. That is, if he ever had any pleasure; for he was a grave and a silent man, generally—never smiling, scarce ever speaking to any one, except on business. Though his handsome house in the pines had been built four or five years, few of his neighbors ever had seen the inside of it. Yet they could not call him haughty or proud, for he spoke as kindly to the humblest man in the town as he did to the richest; and if any one was sick, or in need, his charity was ever extended promptly and unasked.

Although he seldom visited the church in the village, he paid more than any one else to support the pious pastor, who occasionally visited him at the "Pinery", as his cottage was called, and was ever received with courtesy. And Mr. Drummond had settled a regular income on five widows of fishermen who had been lost in a boat belonging to one of his vessels.

Therefore the villagers could not but like him, even if he was not so convivial in his ways as they could have wished.

Twice since he first came to the place he had been absent for two or three months—gone, it was reported, on a visit to England. But he told no one where he went.

The village, though it had its parson and school-ma'am, had neither a lawyer or doctor, and therefore it was uncommonly quiet and healthy. People lived, mostly, to a good old age, and then dropped off quietly on sage-tea and gruel. If any one was ill, a few herbs, administered by some good old lady who understood their uses, soon set them to rights.

It had another "institution," which few villages lack—a tavern; and such a one that it and its landlord, Mr. Nehemiah Hunt, require a particular notice at our hands, and that of the gifted artist who illustrates these stories.

The house was the only two-storied building in the village. A broad porch fronted the first floor, and before this stood the sign-post, at the base of which was a watering-trough, supplied through a wooden pipe from a spring in the rear of the house. The sign was a large gilt anchor—a most significant one to the weary traveler—significant of rest, since he had "come to an anchor", and hopeful of good things to be had within. But that swinging sign was not the only indication that "good cheer" was to be had there. As the porch was shaded by a broad shed overhead, and was well supplied with benches and chairs, it was the favorite lounging-place for two thirds of the male population of the village, when they were not busied elsewhere. One chair, and only one, would contain the other sign that the keeper of that tavern knew how to "keep a hotel," and himself, too. That chair was usually occupied by Nehemiah Hunt, when he was not busy in his bar, or attending to his duty in the post-office adjoining it, for Nehemiah was postmaster. He was a man of weight in that community, even beyond his position as landlord and postmaster. He weighed over three hundred pounds, avoirdupois, and was shaped much like one of the rum-punchons in his well-filled cellar. In fact, if you had put a small pumpkin on the head of one, cut holes for the eyes, stuck a bit of red putty on for a nose, and cut a wide slit for a mouth, and in it stuck a short clay-pipe, you would have made up a very fair similitude of Mr. Hunt. He kept his hair cut short, and went smooth-shaved, so his little round head looked smaller than it was. But there was a good deal of shrewd sense in the little head, after all. Though not a miser, Mr. Hunt

loved money, and was a good hand at getting and saving it. It was said that he had been a Quaker; but had fallen from grace, in consequence of having used a pitchfork on some Irishmen who were trespassing on his property. Whether that was true, this deponent knoweth not; but Nehemiah, when he went abroad, which was seldom, wore a shad-bellied coat and a very broad-brimmed hat.

He had many peculiarities. He was the "news-agent" of the village. That is, he read the papers and retailed the news to all listeners; for he dearly loved to talk. Politics was one of his hobbies. He was a born democrat, he said, and he meant to die one. When the mail came, he opened it and called aloud the name on every letter and paper; so that no one who was present had to ask if there was a letter for them, and every one who was there could tell the agent, when they met them, that letters had come. He knew all about everybody that then lived or ever had lived in the village. He had a serving-man almost as curious as himself, whom he called "Napoleon", though his name was Steve Tompkins. Why he called him Napoleon, no one knew; but he did so, and that was enough to give Steve the name. But in shape Steve was very unlike his master. He was over six feet high when he was stretched out; but, as he generally went bent over, like a bending reed, he did not look so tall. He was lean and bony, but strong as a cart-horse, and when properly supplied with his bitters, quite as steady—all but his head, which had a habit of twitching nervously whenever he spoke—shaking something like the Chinese mandarins one sees in the toy-shops. Steve—or, rather, Napoleon—was good at everything, and ever busy. He was hostler, boot-black, wood-chopper, errand-boy, porter, gardener, and butcher for the house. If he was out of sight, Nehemiah seemed to miss him as much as he would have missed his pipe; and you would soon hear his shrill voice shouting "Napoleon," and keeping up the cry until Napoleon hove in sight.

To see Nehemiah in his huge arm-chair, on the porch, issuing orders to Napoleon, who, with a high-topped and narrow-rimmed old hat in his hand, stood bare-headed to receive orders, was a sight worth paying for. Steve hadn't much hair to boast of, and that little was long, and played like the ribbons of a tattered streamer in the breeze. His sharp features, and the spasmodic jerk of his head as he replied to his master, were enough to set a hard-shell Baptist to laughing. Napoleon's clothing hung about him as loose as a purser's shirt on a hand-spike, and fitted about as well.

Now, having introduced these characters to the "dear reader," I'll close this chapter and prepare to open another.

CHAPTER III.

Not a hundred miles, yet not far from that distance, south and east of the little harbor of Ledge-town, a sharp-built and beautiful schooner was dashing at a rapid rate through the waves of the rough Atlantic, in the deep-blue of the water off soundings. The wind blew half a gale, and the setting sun was going, with a red and choleric face, into a cloud-bank in the west. The vessel was under a full spread of canvas, and her spars, of spruce and Norway pine, bent and buckled to the wind, which tested them and the supporting shrouds and stays most severely.

Her crew, only eight in number, besides the officers and cook, were all on deck; for the wind was increasing, and they expected orders from the captain every moment to reduce sail.

But he—a wildly handsome man, of thirty years old, or thereabouts, stood by the side of his first mate, who had taken the helm from the regular helmsman, and carelessly smoked his cigar, while he watched the bending spars and the spray that flew high and wide from either bow, with easy indifference.

"We'll make land long before morning, if we go at this rate, Cap'n Hewlet," said the mate—a tall and brawny Cape Cod man. "We only had a hundred and seventy miles to make when we took our noon observation, and we haven't run a fathom less than ten knots an hour since then, and we're gaining on that! The 'Send' seems to fly some way when she's near home!"

"Yes; and I'll tell you why it is, Alden," said the captain, showing very white teeth from under his black mustache as he smiled. "Your pretty wife ashore there at Ledge-town, has been praying, and the good angels have got out a tow-line to pull us along!"

"Bless her heart! I'll see her before another

sun sets!" said the mate, and his bronze face flushed a darker red.

"And I'll see the girl that is to be Mrs. Hewlet!" said the captain, throwing away the stump of his old cigar, from which he had just lighted a fresh one.

"That's English Tom's gal, s'pose?" said the mate.

"Of course, I mean Mr. Drummond's girl. Don't you call her a beauty?" said the captain.

"She's trim and neat as a dandy sail-boat, but rayther too tender-lookin' to suit my idea of beauty!" replied the mate. "Now, my Kate—bouncin' Kate I call her—weighs nigh on to two hundred pounds, has an arm as big as any neck, and her cheeks are as red as that 'ere sunset, and ten times as bright. She is my kind of beauty."

"You have the *weight* of the argument on your side," said the captain, with a laugh. "I think I'll go below and mix myself a toddy. Shall I send the steward up with one for you?"

"If you please, sir. And if it freshens any more, hadn't I better take in the foresail and flying-jib?"

"No; hang on to the canvas. The spars and rigging are good, and the craft must carry her cotton, for I'm bound to see Ledge-town by day-light. The old man will light the beacon on the point, and by that I can run to the harbor's mouth, if I don't go in, in the dark."

And throwing his cigar overboard, Captain Hewlet turned away, and went down into his cabin.

CHAPTER IV.

It was the day after Ethelbert Drummond had arrived from college, Nehemiah Hunt sat as usual in his great arm-chair on the porch of his tavern, retailing the news to about a dozen of his neighbors; for the mail had arrived, and brought his weekly copy of the Bangor Whig—a paper which he had long taken, and believed in so religiously, that his oath upon it would have been as good as if taken on the Bible.

"Who's them a comin' down the hill, a canterin' as if necks couldn't be broke if hosses stumbled?" said one of Nehemiah's listeners.

"Neal Dow is agoin' to lecter agin liquor sellin'—eh—what?"

And Nehemiah stopped reading a paragraph he had commenced, and looked at the two persons who were galloping down the hill on the road which led from the "Pines", as Mr. Drummond's residence was generally called, to the village.

"Why, bless my eye-brows! it's young Mister Drummond and his sister, and they're sure to stop in to see me. Napoleon, Napoleon, Napoleon!"

And Mr. Hunt's voice rose louder and louder, as he called for his "man of all work".

"Here I be! What's the use in hollerin' so?" said Steve Tompkins, who had just come out from the bar-room, and was wiping his lips with his shirt-sleeve, indicating thereby that they had lately been moistened.

"Be ready to hold them horses, Napoleon; and git a cheer for the young lady to git off onto; and tell daughter Betsy to dust the parlor-cheers quick; and get some ice from the ice-house; and draw a pitcher of sweet cider, and be quick about it; for there comes young Mister Drummond and his sister," said Mr. Hunt, as rapidly as he could speak.

Steve's head jerked to and fro as if it was coming off, while he heard these orders, and when Mr. Hunt was done speaking, he shuffled off like a rocking-horse to obey them. He had not gone ten steps, however, before, Mr. Hunt again shouted:

"Napoleon!"

"Wall, here I be; what now?" said Steve, turning around and drawing his shirt-sleeve over his nose; for he scorned such a thing as a pocket-handkerchief, or a "nose-rag", as he contemptuously called it.

"Have you swept the bar-room, and cleaned the spittoons, and put fresh sand in the stove-box?" asked Mr. Hunt.

"Yes; but you didn't give me my bitters for doin' it!" said Steve.

"Well, go 'long now. I'll give 'em to you by'm-by. Be alive, they're comin' monstrous fast," said the landlord, folding up his favorite paper, and putting it in his pocket.

Riding well, and splendidly mounted on thorough-bred horses, the brother and sister dashed into the village, and as the landlord predicted, rode directly up to the sign of the Golden Anchor.

Napoleon came shuffling and snuffling out with a chair for Miss Rosalette to dismount

upon, and the fat landlord got up out of his seat and waddled forward like a great Muscovy duck fed for market, and with a smile which extended an enormity of mouth—there's a new word you, Mr. Dictionary-maker—he cried:

"Glad to see you, Mister Drummond. Glad you've got back. It looks like old times to see you and Miss Rosy a horseback. Git off, and come in."

"Thank you," said Ethelbert, springing from his saddle, and helping his sister to dismount. "You don't seem to have lost much flesh by the hot weather we've had lately."

"Can't say as I have; but I've 'most melted a good many times," said Mr. Hunt. "Walk in, sir; walk in, Miss Rosy—my Betsy is a workin' in the parlor. Napoleon, Napoleon!"

"Wall, I'm here, and ain't deaf, nuther," growled Steve, who was holding the horses.

"Take them hosses to the stable, and put a bite of hay afore 'em, and then run and tell my old woman who's come."

"Never mind feeding the horses, Mr. Hunt. We are only going to stay a little while," said Ethelbert. "I rode down to see how my boats look in the boat-house, and to see how you all were getting along."

"Oh, you must stay to dinner, Mr. Drummond," said the fat landlord. "We've got roast goose and apple sass, and biled halibut and green peas, and string-beans and new potatoes. You must stay—I want to hear the news so bad. We haven't got no news, only that pesky Neal Dow is a tryin' to put a stop to sellin' liquor, when even Saint Paul says it's good for the stomach!"

"Your bill of fare is very tempting. I'll see if I can persuade my sister to stay, after I have been to the boat-house."

"Do, Mr. Drummond, do, and I'll be ever so much pleased; and so'll Betsy and my old woman. And I've some nice sweet cider, I know you like that. Napoleon has jest drawn a fresh pitcher, and got some ice. Come in and try it. It's terrible coolin' in warm weather. I've drank more'n two gallon a day along back. Come in, sir. Miss Rosy knows the way to the parlor."

Ethelbert, smiling, followed the worthy landlord into the bar-room, while his sister went to the parlor; for he knew that Nehemiah would be much pained if he refused to taste his capital cider.

After the cider had been tasted and duly praised, Ethelbert came out, intending to go to his boat-house, a building erected by the side of the only wharf in the harbor, which had been built by his father in front of his store.

"How do you do, Captain Hadley?" said he to an oldish, weather-worn looking man, whom he met on the porch. "What kind of weather will I have for a sail to-morrow? I ask, for what you don't know about the weather isn't worth knowing!" he added, as he shook hands with the old fishing-skipper.

"The man that sails a craft to-morrow 'll want his canvass wove out o' steel-wire!" said Hadley. "It's blowin' half a gale outside now, and gittin' heavier and heavier every hour! Jist the way with a southeast blow—it comes on easy as courtin', but it ends wuss than matrimony a darned sight, saves its worst work for the last. It don't come on butt end first like an honest old nor'wester, but sneaks in on you like a blue-nosed shark in a calm!"

"Well, I've nothing to do, and I can wait for fair weather. Will you come and look at my boats?"

"Sartin! Nothin' to do, is jest about the hardest work a man that is a man can have!" said the old man, as he put a quid of tobacco in his mouth, and went toward the wharf with Ethelbert.

CHAPTER V.

When we last saw the schooner "Send", she was making rapid headway under a heavy press of canvas with the wind on her quarter. The red sun was going down with an angry look, and everything portended an increase of the gale already blowing. But Hewlet was a thorough seaman—his craft was staunch and well-rigged, he knew his crew to be thorough-bred seamen, for they had sailed with him for years, and he cared little how hard the wind might blow, even though he was heading toward a dangerous, rock-bound coast.

When he went down into his cabin he quietly mixed a couple of strong rum-toddies—one he sent up to his mate, the other he sipped leisurely while he looked over his chart, and with a pair of dividers, measured the distance run since noon, and picked out the then position of the schooner.

"If I don't make out old Drummond's Bea-

on by midnight, I shall have to leave to!" he muttered to himself. "It is blowing like the devil now, and this is only the first of it. I'd give a hundred dollars for five or six hours more of daylight!"

"When 'll you have supper, cap'n?" said the steward, a neatly-dressed mulatto, touching the Scotch cap which he wore, respectfully, as he spoke.

"Right away, Sam—right away. I must be on deck at dark, for I have the first watch!"

The steward hastened his preparations for the evening meal, and the captain took his chart from the table and went into his state-room. And that room, with its ornaments, told more of the nature of Captain Hewlet than six months of outside acquaintance would have done.

There is nothing more certain as a test of either a man or a woman's taste than the choice of ornaments for their most private apartment. Not the things they show to the world in the parlor, but those kept for their own eyes only. Thus we see the gentleman who is fond of sporting, hanging his very bedroom full of hunting and fishing pictures. The lady who belongs to sewing-societies, and goes to church three times on a Sunday, often hides very wicked novels under her pillow—she weeps over sinners before folks, and cries over her novel in her bedroom.

But to return to Captain Hewlet's room, and to an inspection thereby of his character. The room was large, and well lighted by a swinging-lamp in its centre. Its sides were hung with pictures not only Frenchy and voluptuous, but such as most grand juries out of New York or Boston would have pronounced obscene. In those cities, grand jury-men wear thick spectacles, and seldom see obscenity either in books or pictures which are laid before them for condemnation, though they sometimes carry the articles home, in order to take time for reflection on the subject, probably.

Dice and three or four packs of well-worn playing-cards on the table. Also Fielding's novels—some of Paul de Kock's works, etc.

These things, I repeat, would and did tell what Captain Hewlet really was, better than a six-months' acquaintance with him as he appeared in the outside world. He was a libertine and a gambler. To be a thief and a murderer is no worse; for a gambler is a sneaking thief who steals your money on the false pretence of playing fair, and a libertine's study is to murder virtue, thus damning innocent souls while he prepares his own for eternal perdition.

Yes, Captain Frank Hewlet, with his fine figure, his bold, handsome face, his easy and winning address, was an accomplished libertine, and in city circles a successful gambler. For he did not dare to try that kind of business in Ledgetown. Beyond a game of checkers, now and then at the tavern, no play had ever been known in that quiet lawyerless, doctorless, and therefore, healthful and peaceful village.

"I suppose I shall have to take those pictures down if I ever get the beautiful Rosalette aboard the 'Scud!'" said Hewlet, as he glanced complacently at the nude nymphs that looked lasciviously down from their gilt frames upon him. "And hide these *pape's*, too!" he added, as he laid his hand upon a pack of cards. For she is squeamishly virtuous, and I have heard her say that she had a horror of gambling. She had read that infernal lie, the 'Mysteries and Miseries of New York,' and it painted gamblers and libertines so black that old Nick's boys down below couldn't be blacker! Maybe she'll think better of the class when she is Mrs. Frank Hewlet, as she shall be, by fair means or foul—I don't care much which! She don't seem to like me, but the old man does, and that is more than half the battle. And what is better yet, I know his secret, for I got the old devil boozed once, and he let the cat out of the bag. But he was so drunk that he didn't know it, and forgot all about it before he got sober. I must go over to England myself one of these days, but not before Rosalette is my wife; for the nest she sleeps in will bring golden eggs to me. Her fortune will be worth more risk than I shall run, if there is another Mrs. Hewlet drifting about in a far-off city!"

"Supper's ready, sir," said the steward.

"Very well. Go on deck and tell the mate to let Sherwood take the wheel till after supper."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

Hewlet seated himself at the table and began eating, without waiting for the mate.

The steward came back in a minute or so, and said:

"Mr. Alden says, sir, that it is blowing fresher, and he had rather wait until you are done than to leave the deck. It is very black up to windward, and looks very squally, he says."

"Poh! it's only growing dark because night is at hand," said Hewlet, as he cut into a huge piece of salt beef.

But louder than the dash of raging waters, louder than the shrill piping of the gale, he heard the clear-voiced mate shout:

"Clear away and let go all the halliards! Let everything come by the run!"

"By Jupiter! there must be something coming when Alden yells that way!" said the captain, rising from the table.

The next instant, he was head down to leeward on the floor of the cabin, with a confused mass of broken dishes piled on him, and salt water dashing down through the cabin-skylight by the barrellful over him.

"Thunder! She's on her beam-ends!" he spluttered, half-choked with brine, as he scrambled toward the cabin-door.

A fearful crash fell on his ear the next moment, and the schooner partially righted, though her hull shook as though it would come to pieces.

"Great Heaven! are we on the rocks?" he shouted to his mate, whom he found clinging to the combing of the cabin-hatchway, when at last he reached the upper deck.

"No, sir; but both masts are gone. If they hadn't went, the schooner would have been under before this. She must be half full of water. The forehatch was left open to let air into the hold, by your orders."

"Yea. Get it on—quick!—for the sea breaks all over us!" said Hewlet.

"I will, sir, if I can find a man to help me. I'm afraid most of the men were swept overboard when the masts went. I saw the cook and his caboose go, and there were two or three men in the water astern then. And we must get them masts adrift, they'll thump holes into our sides in no time."

"Yea; it was their thumping that made me think we were ashore. I'll get axes from below. Try and find some men."

And Hewlet got down into the cabin, where, groping about, knee-deep in water, he found the axes, and giving one to the steward, told him to come on deck and help to clear the wreck.

When he got there, he found the mate with one man only—all the rest had been swept overboard in the terrible dash of wind and water which had left the schooner a helpless wreck.

At the risk of their lives—for the sea swept ceaselessly over the water-logged hull of the schooner—the four survivors now cut away such rigging as held the spars in dangerous connection with the hull, and at last got the hatches on, which had fortunately been so secured that they were not swept away, as were the boats, caboose, spare spars, and almost everything else on deck.

After this was done, Hewlet sounded the pump-well, and found less water in the vessel than he expected—only three feet below. If the vessel did not leak badly, this could be pumped out, and they could keep afloat until help came, or they should drift ashore. And the last was the most to be dreaded.

Without a single spar to set canvas on—for there were spare sails below—how could the vessel be kept from drifting upon reefs or rocks where she would instantly go to pieces? Well Hewlet knew the character of the coast under his lee, and that if the storm held on the vessel would surely be forced on to it. Therefore, though half-disheartened, yet fertile in expedient, he got up some tables, chests, and other furniture from the cabin, and lashing them securely together, fastened a kedge anchor to them to sink them deeper into the water, and then hitching the end of a long and strong hawser to the whole, had it put out over the bows to act as a drag to keep the schooner's head to sea, and to impede her drift as much as possible.

"Well, we've done all we can with the schooner; she must work out her own salvation now!" said Hewlet, when they had finished their work and stood on the quarter-deck by the cabin-door.

"God help us! I had hoped to see my wife—my poor, dear Kate—by morning, at least!" said Alden, gloomily. "I was bragging of that at sunset; but I think this doesn't look like it."

"Never mind. Cheer up! We are afloat yet, and all may turn out smooth. Steward, light the main cabin-lamp, and get out the rum and sugar. A glass or two will do all of us good. There is no use in crying for a matter

which cannot be helped! Come, Alden—and you, Ramsay—come down and take something to warm you. We can do no good by staying on deck now. The schooner has got to take care of herself."

They gloomily followed Hewlet below.

CHAPTER VI.

Rosalette Drummond, on entering the parlor of the "Golden Anchor", was greeted respectfully and modestly by Nehemiah Hunt's daughter Betsy, who looked as unlike her huge whale of a father as it was possible for one whose blood ran akin to his. She was a slender, delicate, beautiful girl—looked like anything but "a chip of the old block"—looked as if she were better fitted to adorn some wealthy and luxuriant home than to be as she was, chief chambermaid and waiter at the table, while her mother and a little thin, pale woman, who could work and talk as fast as a little tug-boat can puff and swash along, acted as chief-cook and bottle-washer. True, there were not a great many regular boarders, or any extraordinary number of transient guests to wait upon or cook for, still there was a great deal of work to do for two such delicate females. But they had "Napoleon" for an aid. He brought wood and water, emptied the slops, and even swept out when they would let him; for he prided himself on being kind to the "wimmen folks".

"I'm so glad to see you, Miss Drummond!" cried Betsy, who was dusting the last chair in the room. "Do take off your riding-cap and sit down. I am so thankful to you for the books you sent down to me, though I have but little time to read, except at night, when our folks are in bed. I read 'Ivanhoe' through in a single night; for I could not sleep until I had got over the last page!"

"I am glad you are pleased with the books, my good Betsy; I will send you some others when you have read all I sent you. But excuse my taking off my cap and gloves. Brother is only going down to look at his boats, and then we are to resume our ride."

"Betsy! you Betsy!" cried the well-known voice of her father from the bar-room.

"Excuse me a moment—father calls me," said Betsy, as she glided out of the room with a grace which many a one in a higher station would have been glad to possess.

She returned in a few moments, with her beautiful face radiant with joy.

"Father says your brother is going to stay to dinner, Miss Drummond!" she cried. "Now do, please, take off your things, while I go and give mother some directions from father. Father is making a nice iced lemonade for you, which I'll go after as soon as I come from the kitchen."

"Your father is very kind," said Rosalette, as she laid aside her riding-hat and gloves.

Betsy soon after brought the lemonade, and found Miss Drummond looking at some daguerreotypes which were arranged upon the mantel-shelf as ornaments.

"Looking at my pictures, I see, Miss Drummond. Do you recognize any of them?"

"None except that of yourself and Captain Hewlet. You make a very handsome couple," replied Rosalette.

"He would have me sit and have our pictures taken together, when the daguerreotypist was stopping here!" said Betsy, blushing.

"I admire his good taste!" said Rosalette. "You are very fair, and he is rather dark. The contrast is splendid. He is a fine-looking man, and every one knows that you are the belle of the village!"

"O Miss Drummond! how can you say so! If I was only half as handsome as you are, I'd be glad," said Betsy, not displeased, however, at the compliment paid to her beauty.

What woman ever was?

"Rumor says that you and the captain are to be married one of these days," said Rosalette.

"Then Rumor knows more than I do," said Betsy, quietly. "Though Captain Hewlet is always telling me that he loves me when he is here, he never has said a word about marrying me, and I'm afraid he never will!"

And Betsy sighed as she said so.

"That sigh tells me that you love him, Betsy," said Rosalette, with a smile.

"How can I help it? He is very handsome, and so kind to me. He never comes from abroad without bringing me some present," replied the honest-hearted and unsophisticated girl. "But please, Miss Rosalette, don't tell any one what I am so foolish as to say to you."

I don't know why, but I feel as if I could tell you everything."

"I am glad you feel such confidence in me, Betsy. And now, take my advice; don't love Frank Hewlett too hard until he does speak of marriage! If his intentions are honorable, he ought not to keep them back; for he is quite well off, and able to marry. Father has several thousand dollars of his at interest."

"He is to be back soon—is he not?" asked Betsy.

"Yes. Father looks for the schooner every hour. How nice and cool this lemonade is! Ah! there comes Ethelbert. I hear his voice and step!"

And a flush of warm delight passed over Rosalette's lovely face.

"Ah! how are you, Miss Betsy? On my word, it is wrong for me to ask, you look so well," cried Ethelbert, as he came into the room. Then turning to his sister, he said: "You seem to have taken off your things for a stay, Sister Rosy?"

"Why, yes. Mr. Hunt sent in word that you had promised to stay to dinner."

"Did he? Why, the roguish old Falstaff! I told him I would, if you consented."

"He said nothing about conditions; but it would be a pity to disappoint him by refusing his kind invitation."

"So it would, sis. We will stay of course; and I will go and talk with Mr. Hunt, while you enjoy the company of Miss Betsy. The old gentleman is so anxious to hear the news from the city, that I must tell him all that I know, or he'll melt with warm weather and impatience."

And Ethelbert, with a light step, went back to talk to Nehemiah.

CHAPTER VII.

How much character may be read in the features! I have noticed the great difference in the looks of Ethelbert Drummond and his sister. His hair, dark and glossy, curling around a brow and face completely Southern or Italian in its features and complexion; his large eyes so black that shadows were light in them; and so full of passion, to.

Rosalette had one of those sweet English faces—ah! but too well remembered is one, yet mirrored in the shattered marble of my heart—one of those sweet, pure, loving, English faces of lily and rose, framed in with hair of gold and starred with eyes of blue, which, once seen, can never, never be forgotten.

So in Ethelbert's face you could read a haughty, proud, and impetuous spirit—wildly strong in its loves, fiercely bitter in its hate!

Rosalette could hardly hate. Her gentle nature could not nurture that quick, wild, fire, which burns but the more intensely while time fans the flame; but she could love. Yet her love, of slow growth, and pure, too, as the flowers of earth, was strong, very strong, because slow-growing love is ever deep-rooted.

The brother and sister were pleasantly engaged on the morning of the day after their visit to the "Golden Anchor". They were singing duets in the parlor of the cottage in the Pines, Rosalette playing the accompaniments on the piano. A wild storm raged without, but they heeded it not; all was cozy and cheery within, and they drowned the sound of outward turmoil with the music of their well-cultivated voices.

"Where is father?" asked Rosalette, during a pause in their singing.

"I do not know; but I think most likely he has gone down to the Bluff to look for the 'Scud'; he has been expecting her in for two or three days. I saw him put on his oil-cloth coat and sou'wester hat an hour or more since. But he is coming. I hear his step."

Scarcely had the words left Ethelbert's lips when Mr. Drummond came in. His face was flushed with excitement, and he was almost breathless with haste.

"Ethelbert, mount your horse and gallop to the village as quick as you can, and call for men, to come to me at the Bluff!" he cried. "Tell them to bring ropes with them. A distressed vessel is drifting in toward the rocks, and I am almost sure it is the 'Scud'. No boat can live outside, and it will be God's mercy if we save a life from the vessel, for I have never seen a worse sea on in my whole life! Hurry, boy, hurry!"

Ethelbert was off before the last words had been spoken by his father; and when Rosalette came in with some refreshments she had hurried

to get for her father, the brother was seen galloping past the window, on his way to the village.

"Are you going right back to the Bluff, father?" asked Rosalette.

"Yes, child, as quickly as I can."

"As soon as I can put up some restoratives, and such things as may be useful, I will go, too, father."

"No, no, Rosy—no, no! It blows terribly out there; and such sights as we may have to see are not for women to look upon. It is no place for you. Stay here, my child, stay here," said the old gentleman, as he put on his sou'wester, and hurried away again.

"A woman's place is ever where she can be useful," said Rosalette, quietly.

And getting a basket, she put liquors and some dry flannel in it, and wrapping a mantle around her slender form, she followed her father.

CHAPTER VIII.

With terrible strength the wind swept in over the face of the granite bluff upon which Mr. Drummond stood again, looking off with his spy-glass toward a dark object which rose and fell upon the huge, foam-crested waves, not more than two or three miles from the range of white, yeasty breakers, which rolled, and roared, and pitched their fleecy surges about at the foot of the bold rocks on which he stood. Only as he was sheltered more than breast-high by some huge boulders, whose lee he sought, could he stand and hold his glass steadily in the gale.

"It is the 'Scud'—I know the hull—and only four men upon her deck! They have a flag of distress flying on a short staff!" said the old man to himself, as the helpless hulk continued to drift in toward the shore. "God help them! If they pass the outside reef, they must be dashed to pieces against the cliff! It will be a miracle if we save a single life!"

A hand, laid lightly on his shoulder, caused him to turn around, and he saw that Rosalette had followed him.

"Crouch down behind the rock, my girl, or you'll be blown away!" he shouted—for only a shout could be heard above the shrill trumpeting of the wild gale.

"No danger, father. Can you see the vessel now?" she replied, putting her mouth close to his ear.

"Yes; it is the 'Scud'—a perfect wreck—only four men on her deck! Take the glass and look for yourself."

"Poor fellows, the sea seems to break all over them every few moments," said Rosalette, after a long, shuddering gaze through the glass.

"Yes, the vessel is water-logged. They are most likely lashed with ropes, to hold them from being swept overboard."

"Can they not reach the harbor, father?"

"If they had a single spar standing, and could put out canvas enough to give the schooner steerage-way, they might; but they have not, and she is drifting to the northward of the entrance. By the way, she now drifts—she'll strike that reef out there, right in front of us!"

"Oh, mercy, the vessel must be dashed in pieces!"

"Yes; and if a single man escapes, it will be more than I expect. My dear girl, you ought not to stay here to see such a sight as this."

"Father, please do not send me away. Although my heart were frozen with horror, I could not look away now; and I—even I—may be of some use by-and-by."

"As you like, my child. I hope the villagers will soon be here. I see, by the stir down there, that Ethelbert has aroused them. They are gathering rapidly—men, and even women and children, are coming. I wish the women would keep away. They do nothing but scream and cry."

"You may think differently, father, if any of those poor, half-drowned men are washed ashore. Men can do daring deeds; but when it comes to nursing the helpless, a woman's hand is the most tender."

"Maybe you are right, girl—maybe you are right. But I'd rather hear thunder than a woman's scream; and be soaked in a four-hour's shower, than to see her tears."

"There comes Ethelbert, riding as fast as he can," said Rosalette, pointing to her brother, as he dashed along the path that led to the bluff.

In a few moments the young man arrived, and, springing from his horse, loosed the bridle,

and the sagacious animal immediately turned back toward its stable.

"The men will soon be here, father," said Ethelbert, as he glanced off to seaward.

"Yes, I see—the whole population of the village is coming."

"No wonder," said Rosalette. "Nearly all of the crew have wives and families there. Poor Betsy Hunt will feel dreadful about Captain Hewlett, I know."

"Why don't they let the anchors go—they must be on soundings now!" said Ethelbert, as he gazed at the drifting hull.

"There are over forty fathoms of water where she is, and it holds thirty close in to the reef there, where the rocks are not three feet under water. Her anchors wouldn't hold her a minute in such a sea, with this gale blowing. The vessel will hit the reef and go to pieces," said Mr. Drummond. "Then my only hope is, that the men, or some of them, may drift in to the foot of the bluff on pieces of the wreck, and catch ropes which we'll lower down to them. There is no other chance for their lives, that I can see."

"A poor one it is," said Ethelbert. "But look how the villagers are hurrying here!"

And he pointed to a long column of persons, who were running and walking toward them. Foremost of all, far ahead of the rest, came a female, whose disheveled hair streamed out from her bonnetless head on the gale, and who, without mantle or shawl, seemed almost to fly toward them.

It was poor Betsy Hunt. Pale and breathless, she reached the spot where Rosalette stood, and as she strained her eyes in looking off through the driving gale toward the vessel, she asked, in a husky whisper, yet such a whisper as Rosalette could hear:

"Is it the 'Scud'?"

"Yes," replied Miss Drummond. "But keep up a brave heart, Betsy—father thinks the crew can be saved."

"O God—no—no! They will all perish. He will perish right there before my eyes!" moaned the wretched girl; "but I will die, too. The same watery grave that claims him shall receive me."

And ghastly pale, sick at heart, poor Betsy sank upon the ground at the feet of Rosalette, her face in her hands.

Next came the wife of Mr. Alden, with a sweet baby in her arms, even she out-speeding the stalwart men who hurried on. If Love has not wings, there is locomotion in it.

"Is it the 'Scud'?" she screamed in Mr. Drummond's ear, as she reached his side.

"Yes!" said the old gentleman.

"Can you see my Harry there?" she next asked.

"I can see four men, but cannot yet say who they are," he replied.

"Jest you hold the baby, and let me look through the glass. I can tell my Harry as far as I can see him."

With a despairing look, Mr. Drummond took the baby, which was a plump little miniature of its stout mother, and it began to show its pleasant proclivities by entangling both of its chubby hands in the old gentleman's hair.

"Yes, yes—my Harry is there. I know him by the red handkercher he wears around his neck. 'Twas the last thing, 'ceptin' a kiss, I gave him afore he went to sea the last time. I say, Betsy Hunt, you're sittin' there doin' nothin'—won't you hold my baby? I'm goin' to help the men, if there's anything to do here. I'm as stout as any of 'em."

"Can you see him there?" asked Betsy, rising, her face as white as the foam in the breakers beyond.

"Yes, I can see Harry. I know'd him in a minute."

"I don't mean him. Can you see Captain Hewlett?"

And a faintly rosy flush came over Betsy's face as she spoke.

"Oh! I'll look agin'. Jest you take the baby. It is pullin' all o' Mr. Drummond's hair out."

Betsy took the child, and Mrs. Alden—or Bouncing Kate, as her husband called her—took the glass and looked again at the now plainly-to-be-seen hull.

"Yes," she said—"yes; I know the capting by that long, black, curling hair of his. He's bare-headed and in his shirt-sleeves. He and Harry are doin' somethin' for'ard now."

Mr. Drummond took the glass from the woman and looked.

"They're letting go their anchors," he said, "but 'twill be of little use, I'm afraid."

And he shook his head despondingly.

"Never say die, old man, while life's left," said Bouncing Kate. "My Harry wasn't born to be drowned, no way—not here afore my eyes, nohow. Cheer up, Betsy; cheer up, gal; we'll save 'em."

Poor Betsy clasped the sweet child which she held close to her bosom, and cowered down out of the gale behind the rock, but she made no reply.

And now, as Bouncing Kate—though rather a rough one—seems to be the right kind of a woman for a brave sailor's wife, we will devote a few lines to a description of her.

She was tall, fleshy, yet finely formed. Her features were of that strong, bold, yet not unharmonious type, which peculiarly characterizes the thinking and the working woman of the North. Her plain calico dress fitted her form nicely, and both her and her baby were models of cleanliness in dress and person. She wore no shawl, and had no hoops to balloonize with in that gale. In truth, her plump figure required none. It is only the half-starved city skeleton that require such artificial spreading out. Get mad now, little city delicates, and even you country imitators of city fashion. I'm out of reach of your tongues and fingers here in my "wildwood home", and can write what I think, without fear or favor. I haven't got a "Polly Martial" here to wool me, either, thank heaven!

Betsy had tied one of her husband's natty tarpaulin hats on her head with a handkerchief, but the wind had blown down her hair, which had been bound up and fastened with a comb, and now it blew out and fell in a rich auburn mass behind her. Her complexion was pure red and white, with only a freckle here and there, to contrast properly the fairness of her cheeks and brow. She was, in short, really a fine-looking woman for the class which she represented—such a woman as seemed fit to be a mother to brave sons and good daughters.

The men now began to reach the spot. Steve Lumpkins, snuffing and blowing like a porpoise working off a lee shore, was among the first—and away off in the rear, making slow headway with his huge form, could be seen Nehemiah Hunt. The village had been completely deserted by all except the old people and very little children. Even the minister, Elder Noble, was there—his calm and thoughtful face wearing a sad but yet a hopeful expression.

"Do you think the men can be saved?" he asked of Mr. Drummond.

"It will be only by the mercy of God, if they are, sir! Human help will do but little for them!" said Mr. Drummond.

"Then let us kneel and pray for God's mercy!" said the minister.

Instantly, as they saw the minister kneel down, every hat was removed from the men's heads. Some of them, and all of the women knelt, while that pious minister of the only true and living God uttered a heartfelt and eloquently-beseeching prayer for God's aid in that dark hour of danger, and perhaps of death.

And when he had finished, all rose strengthened—the men, in fortitude and determination to do their best—the women, in faith and hope.

And now, rushing as close to the bluff as they dared, they watched with intense anxiety the drift of the doomed vessel. She was now so near that the men on board could be seen distinctly with the naked eye, and waving hats and handkerchiefs told the poor fellows that they were seen and their situation known.

On—the schooner drifted until within less than half a mile of the reef of rocks before spoken of. Then she seemed for a little while to stop.

"Her anchors hold—her anchors hold!" shouted Mr. Drummond.

"Yes; and if the wind would only 'bate a little, they'd be saved yet!" said Captain Hadley. "But no cables will stand that strain long, if they did, they'd drag the very eyes out of the craft!"

"She's drifting in again—the cables have broke or the anchors are gone!" groaned Mr. Drummond.

"Yes—in ten minutes she'll be on the reef. It will soon be over in one way or another, at any rate!" said Hadley.

Not another word was spoken. The people almost held their breath. Never was there a more intense anxiety than that which now held them as if spell-bound.

CHAPTER IX.

If we wish to see the difference in feeling between two men who look at Death as he approaches

others—and those who have to look into his weird and ghastly eyes as he comes to themselves, we must go on board the 'Scud' and see how Hewlet and his mate felt.

Early in the morning of that day they had seen the land, and had with the deepest anxiety watched it as it rose higher and higher to view while they drifted in toward it. At first they could not tell even with the glass upon what part of the coast they were drifting—there is so much similarity on some parts of our Northern shores. But ere long they plainly made out the bold headland which marked the little harbor of Ledgetown, and as it was well under their lee, they still hoped they might drift into the channel. But the hope was slender. Were it but a shadow, men in such a position would grasp it.

"If we had but an oar or two, or ever so small a bit of the mast left—or a spar of any kind, so as to show a little canvass, we might get steerage-way on her and save ourselves yet!" said Hewlet, as he recognized their position.

"Haden't we better cut away the drag—maybe the hull will catch wind enough to steer her!" said Alden.

"No—the drag keeps us head to sea!" replied Hewlet. "We are too much water logged to even get steerage-way by the action of the wind on the hull, and while the drag is out we go slower!"

"Yes—and that is the worst of it!" said Alden, impatiently. "I hate this slow work. If I've got to die, I want it over with in a hurry. If I was going to be hung, I'd jump from the scaffold the minute they got the rope around my neck. I'd make no dying speeches!"

"Well, I'm in no hurry to die!" said Hewlet, with a smile. "Something may turn up yet that will land us safe and sound. The wind may lull so that our anchors will hold when we get in where we can use them!"

"It may, but I doubt if it does!" said Alden. "It looks to me as if it would blow a day or two yet; and now the wind increases instead of going down! I wonder if they can see us yet from shore?"

"Hardly! We're very low in the water now, and it is not likely that any one will be on the look-out. Mr. Drummond may be—he lives so near to Beacon Bluff!" replied Hewlet. "We'll soon know, at any rate—we're drifting in at the rate of at least four or five miles an hour—probably faster. The sea heaves us in fast, and the wind helps whenever we top the waves!"

"If we are seen, I'll bet that Bouncing Kate is out to look for us as soon as she hears of anything off the coast. Bless the woman!—I don't care much about dyin', as far as I'm concerned, but I'd hate to leave her a widow, and my poor little Molly without a father. She'd pick up some other man, maybe, that wouldn't treat her and the baby as well as I do!" said Alden.

And when he spoke of his wife and child, the brave fellow's lip quivered, and a moistness came into his eye which was not occasioned by the spray that now and then dashed over them.

"Let us go down into the cabin and take one more drink to those we love, Alden!" said Hewlet. "We may as well be merry as sad over our luck!"

"I'd rather not drink now, captain, though I thank you all the same. My Kate doesn't like the smell of liquor on my breath; and if I should escape, I'd hate to have her smell rum the first thing when she went to kiss me!" replied the mate.

Hewlet forced a laugh and said:

"As it is not likely anybody will offer to kiss me, if I'm lucky enough to get ashore, I'll go and get some toddy. Steward, you and Ramsay may go and help yourselves!"

The men heard the captain—but they did not go after the liquor. They felt too much the peril of their situation to need any artificial excitement.

"Lend me your glass, captain. It seems to me that I can see people on the bluff!" said Alden, after Hewlet returned from the cabin.

"There are people there!" said Hewlet, glancing first through the glass, and then handing it to the mate. "But they'll see a sorry sight before long. Our drift is taking us to the north of the harbor, and we'll strike that cursed reef in front of Beacon Bluff, I'm sure!"

"Men, and women, too; a crowd of 'em are up there!" said Alden, as he lowered the glass. "I'll bet my life that my Kate is among 'em. God help the poor girl if I don't get ashore alive! It would be tough enough for her to know I was dead, without seeing me go right before her face. I wish we were anywhere but here on the coast!"

"Ramsay, try the lead, and see if we're on soundings yet!" said the captain.

"Ay, ay, sir. Forty fathoms—or a little less," said the man, after trying with the deep-sea lead.

"Good—we'll soon shoal to thirty. Alden, we'll let go both anchors. They may hold for a while!"

"Yes, sir; but if the wind don't lull very soon, it will be only staving off death for a little while; for if the chains did hold, such a sea as this would soon drag the very bows out of the schooner. I'll tell you plainly, Captain Hewlet, I think our time in this world is short. I don't say so because I'm afraid, but I know that no man can ever get through them breakers and on to that shore alive. If we had the best life-boat that ever floated, we could do nothing with her in this place."

"It is true," said Hewlet, gravely. "But I shall live just as long as I can. Come and help me get the anchors loose. The chains are stopped well below, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir, I saw to that. They're shackled around the stump of the foremast down there, and stoppered at the windlass-bits beside."

"Well, we will try them. If they fail, we may make up our minds to go as others have gone before us."

"Yes, sir. And I wouldn't mind it a bit if it wasn't here, right where my wife with my poor little helpless baby are looking at us. That goes hard with me."

"And I've an old mother ashore there; but I don't think she is able to be out in that crowd," said Ramsay, with a quivering voice. "I've supported her on my wages, but God knows how she'll get along now!"

"Mr. Drummond never will let her want. That is some comfort my lad," said Alden, as he went forward to help the captain.

"She won't live long after I'm gone," said the man. "It will break her heart, I know. Steward, you've got no relations there?"

"No; but there is one there whose heart will ache when I am gone, for all that," said the steward, as he took a daguerrean portrait of a young girl from his pocket, and looked, perhaps, his last look upon it.

CHAPTER X.

Speechless—many of them pallid and tearful, the gathered people stood on that lofty bluff, and gazed down at the schooner's helpless hull, which, broken adrift from its anchors, was rapidly closing toward the reef where the breakers broke in high surges of foam not eighty rods from the main shore.

Closer and closer she came. The four men on board stood close together, evidently prepared for and expecting the shock which must dash the fated vessel into fragments, for a hull of iron could never stand the dash of such waves upon a ledge of granite.

Nearer and nearer; she was now within a biscuit's toss of the ledge. Then a huge wave came rolling on, and lifted her up—up so high that many hoped it would carry her clear over the reef into the deep water between it and the bluff.

But it only lifted the hull up to that great height to roll on and dash it down upon the ledge with such a crash that the sound was plainly heard on shore above the shrill blast of the storm.

There, for an instant, it loomed up darkly in the yeast of foam, and then, in shattered pieces, it was seen to be parting asunder.

Another monster sea rolled in, and as it swept over men and vessel, they disappeared; and then a wild scream rose from a hundred lips among the people, coming as if from one terror-stricken voice.

"Be ready with your ropes on the edge of the cliff, men!" shouted Mr. Drummond. "Some of them may swim in, or, clinging to a piece of the vessel, reach the foot of the cliff!"

"Mortal man can never swim through that sea!" said Captain Hadley, sotto voce.

But men now stood close to the edge of the cliff with long coils of rope in their hands. And, foremost of all, holding a rope herself, stood Kate Alden, her pale face as steady and firm as if it were cut from marble, looking out at the black pieces of hull which specked the foamy waters, and waiting for the father of the child—of that sweet baby which was now toying with the golden tresses of poor Betsy Hunt, as she sat, half fainting, on the ground, holding it pressed to her wildly-beating heart.

Closer and closer the fragments of wreck drove in toward the foot of that lofty cliff,

against which the huge waves dashed with a shock which made the mighty rocks tremble. And straining eyes sought to distinguish human forms on some of them amid the turmoil of the mad waters.

At last, one was seen to which a man was evidently clinging. More than once he was washed loose as it rolled over and over, but with the wild energy of a death-struggle, he would regain the shattered plank, which each moment came nearer and nearer.

"Is it my Harry? Tell me, quick!" screamed Kate Alden to Mr. Drummond, who was looking through his glass.

"I think not. It looks like Captain Hewlet," said Mr. Drummond.

"O my God! do save my poor Harry!" said the poor woman, mournfully. "If he is lost, what will me and the poor baby do?"

And tears came out of her blue eyes, and rolled down her pale cheeks, while she looked farther out in hopes to see another form struggling for life.

Alas!—alas! for her and the poor baby! No other form was to be seen above the waters except that which was now so close in to the cliff that it could be seen and recognized by the naked eye.

"He'll never have strength to clutch a rope. Some one ought to be lowered down to try to fasten to him as the wave sweeps him in," cried Captain Hadley, who saw that the strength of the half-drowned man was nearly exhausted.

"It is worth a man's life to be lowered down there!" said an old fisherman. "If a wave dashes him against the face of the cliff, it'll smash the life out of him."

"I'll give a hundred dollars to the man that tries it—five hundred if he saves Captain Hewlet!" cried Mr. Drummond.

The men looked from one to another, but did not speak. Money has its value, but when life is put in the scales against it, gold is of light weight.

But there was one there, slender and delicate, whose soul, above all mercenary thought, prompted him to risk his life to save that of a man for whom he entertained no love. Ethelbert Drummond seized a rope, and quickly knotting a bowline-sling, placed himself in it, and shouted:

"Take the rope, a dozen of you, and lower me away. Bear a hand; the man will be in to the cliff in three or four minutes!"

"My God! Ethelbert, what are you doing?" shouted Mr. Drummond.

"My duty, father. Do not say a word to unnerve me. I need all my strength and judgment now."

"God bless and help you, my boy! But I'd rather go myself," said the old man.

But, by this time, the brave fellow was over the cliff, lowered carefully by a score of strong men, who were superintended by Captain Hadley, who watched the descent as he bent over the face of the cliff, using his coat as a mat to keep the edge of the rock from chafing and stranding the rope.

"Hold on!" he shouted, when he saw that Ethelbert was nearly to the level of the top of the waves, as they came in. "Get another rope ready, and lower it with a slipping noose for him to use; he is not strong enough to lift Hewlet from the water, if he is lucky enough to get hold of him. Raise him a fathom or two higher—quick, before that big sea come in! If it hits him, his life isn't worth a rush."

The men jerked the brave boy up just in time. The next moment, the huge wave came in, and, even elevated as he was, it buried him in its foamy crest, and dashed him roughly against the rock. But jarred and half blinded with the spray as he was, he saw that Hewlet was coming on a second wave; and, with a coolness beyond praise, he clutched the second rope, which now reached him, and extended the other hand toward the drowning man.

In swept the huge sea; its spray literally covering and blinding him, but he saw where Hewlet was; and bracing his feet for a moment against the cliff, swung himself out so that he grasped the perishing man by the hair as he again broke loose from the plank.

"Hoist!—hoist quick!" shouted Hadley. "Hoist quick, before the timbers crush them against the rock!"

The strong men rapidly pulled up the rope hand over hand. Ethelbert had got his arms around Hewlet, and had not used the second rope. It was a fearful strain for one so unused to muscular exercise, but he clung nobly to his prize, and in a few moments both men lay upon

the brow of the cliff—Hewlet utterly exhausted and insensible, and Ethelbert panting and habbaserat from his daring feat.

"My dear, brave brother!" cried Rosalette, as she threw her arms around him and kissed him.

Then, bringing her basket into view, she said to her father:

"There are restoratives here, father. You had better use them on Captain Hewlet."

"I'll have him carried to the house. We can attend to him better there," said Mr. Drummond.

"A little brandy down his throat now will do him good, sir," said Hadley. "If life isn't got into him soon, he'll have none to get by the time he can be carried to the house."

"Yes; you're right. He must have swallowed a heap of salt water," said Mr. Drummond.

"I should think he had," said one of the men, who, rudely practical, thrust his finger down Hewlet's throat, and produced the action of an emetic.

"Is he alive?" gasped poor Betsy Hunt, who still crouched down by the rock with the baby in her arms, when Rosalette came back to her.

"Yes," said Rosalette; "my brother saved him."

"Oh, thank God!" gasped Betsy; and she fainted.

Rosalette took up Alden's poor child, and carried it to its mother, who stood pale and still, like a white-faced statue, looking out with wishful eyes on the dark waters.

"Here is your poor baby, Mrs. Alden; it was crying for you," said Rosalette.

The woman took the child, and mechanically, without appearing to know what she did, put it to the breast to nurse. But she did not turn her head, or lift her gaze from the sea, or say a single word in reply to Rosalette, who, relieved of the infant, hurried back to the aid of poor Betsy.

But joy don't kill. Betsy was soon on her feet; and when Captain Hewlet was so far recovered that he could be carried up to Mr. Drummond's house, she was able to follow those who carried him.

"No more will come in; the other poor fellows have seen their last of life!" said Mr. Drummond, after looking again and again over the water through his glass.

"No," said Captain Hadley. "Your boy is a hero, Mr. Drummond! He has shamed the best of our men."

"God bless him! he did his duty!" said the father, proudly. "But I expected to hear you say he was gone; I did not dare to look over the cliff myself when he was down there. But look, Captain Hadley—look at poor Alden's wife standing there. Do go and say something to comfort her. Tell her that she shall be provided for just as if he had lived. I cannot bear to talk to her. You know her well, and can do it."

"It is a hard job, but I'll do it. Poor girl! she idolized her husband, and he was a noble fellow."

And Captain Hadley went to speak to Kate, while Mr. Drummond followed the men whom he had ordered to carry Hewlet to the house.

"Kate, I'm sorry for you; but it is God's will, and can't be helped!" said Captain Hadley, as he approached Alden's widow.

She did not appear to hear him, but stood in the same posture that she held when Rosalette carried the baby to her, and her gaze was still fixed on the water. The baby had gone to sleep at the breast.

Captain Hadley raised his voice, and said:

"Come, Kate, my good girl—come home with me. My wife will try to comfort you; she can do it better than I can. Come."

And he laid his hand upon her shoulder.

She felt the touch, and turning around, looked at him and smiled. Smiled, but such a smile! It was colder than sunlight on snow.

"My Harry is dead, dead, dead!" she said slowly. "This is his child—his little Molly—that he kissed and cried over when he left her. He must have felt then that he was never coming back. My Harry is dead, dead! and I shall die, too!"

"My God! the poor woman is crazy!" said Mr. Hadley, as he noticed the wild light in her eyes. "The blow has taken reason from her."

The baby woke at this moment, and cried for the mother unconsciously pressed it too rudely against her bosom.

"Don't cry, baby—don't cry!" she said, plaintively. "Your papa isn't here to take you now."

And then she, too, wept—wept as if her very heart was dissolving in tears. And after a long while she allowed good Captain Hadley to lead her down to his home in the village.

CHAPTER XI.

Slowly and sadly the villagers went back to their homes after Hewlet had been left at the house of Mr. Drummond; for he had so far recovered as to be able to say that all of his crew had been aboard when he left New York, and of them not one beside himself was now alive. With the exception of the steward, all of the crew belonged in the village, and had relatives there. And it is not to the palace that mourning only comes; grief can be felt in the humble cottage, and sorrow can burden the lowliest heart. In very truth, though no palpable outward show might indicate it, the poor villagers felt their loss as severely, and grieved full as deeply, as would the nobles of a foreign land, or the haughtier moneyocracy of our own great city, if any of their "bright particular stars" had been suddenly stricken out from view by the shadowy hand of death.

Last of all, came Captain Hadley, carrying the orphan babe of poor Alden, and leading his once darling Kate by the hand. But oh! how changed she was, even in that brief time. She who had been the gayest, rosiest-cheeked woman in the village; whose clear, joyous laugh could have been heard half a mile, and whose voice, when she sung her baby to sleep, sounded as clear as a bugle-note, now walked along, pale, silent—her blue eyes looking toward the earth, and shaded by the long, brown lashes which were wet by the still tears that ran slowly down her face.

"Poor Kate!—poor Kate! This will break her heart. We will hear no more gay songs from her lips!" said Nehemiah Hunt, as she passed the sign of the "Golden Anchor", where once more he sat in his big arm-chair.

And when she had passed, and was out of hearing, he shouted:

"Napoleon!"

"Here I be. What's wantin', Nehemiah?" asked Steve, who, coming from the direction of the bar, and wiping his mouth with his shirt-sleeve, seemed to have been "refreshing" himself.

"Git your wheelbarrow, Napoleon, and put a barrel o' flour on it, and a cheese, and a pail o' butter, and a couple o' hams, and a pailful o' sugar, and three or four pound o' tea, and wheel 'em over to the Widder Alden's, right away. Do it quick; for she's gone into Captain Hadley's, and may stay awhile, and then she won't know where they come from. Put 'em in the house, and come away, and don't say a word to nobody about it."

"The Widder Alden? Who's she?" asked Steve, in wonder.

"Why, Bouncin' Kate. Don't you know she's a widow now? Wasn't her husband drowned to-day right afore our eyes?"

"Why, yes. I didn't think o' that," said Steve, waking from his wonderment. "I'll go and git the things onto the wheelbarrow right off."

And Steve hurried away.

"Napoleon!" shouted Mr. Hunt, before Steve had more than reached the back yard, where the wheelbarrow was usually kept.

"Wall, what now? Here I be," said Steve, as he came back.

"Jest you look into the widder's wood-shed, and see if she's got plenty of wood in it. If she hasn't, stop into Ben Bliss's as you come back, and tell him to haul her a couple o' load and come here for his pay. And tell peaked-nosed Haight to go and saw it up for her, and I'll pay him, too."

"Yes; I'll do that. I'm glad to see you kind to the widders, Mr. Hunt. I'm allers kind to 'em myself. There's the Widder Bombasine—Lord! how much I've done for her. I've carried wash-water, and run of arrands for her till my feet was sore many a time. But widders ain't thankful, Mr. Hunt, not as a general thing. I don't remember as the Widder Bombasine ever thanked me for anything yet."

"Well, well; hurry along, now, Napoleon, and you shall have a big drink when you come back. I'm afraid the poor widder will get home afore you get there, and then she'll know where the things come from, and I don't want her to. I want her to think they come from the goodness o' God, and not from a poor devil of a sinner like me."

Napoleon did not wait to hear all this, but hurried off to carry out the work of true charity.

CHAPTER XII.

She was a beautiful woman—young, finely-formed, yet her face bore the unmistakable marks of care and grief. She sat in a plain, though neatly-furnished room in one of those—I was going to call hard names, but I will not, for I may be reduced to one of them myself by some sad misfortune—one of those places known as a second-class boarding-house in New York. That she was a mother, was evident from the fact that a beautiful little child—a wee bit of a two-year-old girl—was playing with a doll almost as big as herself, on the floor. Evident the more, because the child in its great black eyes, dark, curling hair, and beautiful features, so much resembled herself.

"Muzzer, baby want it face wash!" said the little elf, as she pointed to a spot of dirt on the waxen face of her doll.

"Mother will wash it for her daughter by-and-by!" said the lady, looking fondly at her child.

Then she raised her eyes, for the door of her room was opened, and an elderly woman, whose face was thin and sharp, and needed more washing than the little girl's doll, came in. Her sleeves were pinned up above her elbows, and her hair looked as if she had been dusting furniture with it.

"How d' do, Miss Hewlet? I'm so tired o' makin' beds, and sweepin', and loorkin' 'round, that I'd thought I step in and rest a little bit," said the woman, in a voice full as musical as the last squeak of an expiring pig.

"You are very welcome to do so, Mrs. Larkins," said the lady addressed as Miss, but really Mrs., Hewlet.

"What an awful storm we had last night!" continued the woman, as she dumped herself down on a chair. "I thought 'twould shake the house down! And it is blowin' yet! It must be awful out to sea. If I had a man folerin' the sea like you have, I'd fret myself to death about him in such a time. But I haven't got no man to fret about. I've had and buried three, and I suppose that's about my share. I don't think I'll ever have another one—not while I keep a boardin'-house at any rate, and I s'pose I'll have to keep one till I die; for I'll never get money enough ahead to stop and do anything else!"

And the thrice-widowed landlady breathed a heavy sigh.

"You keep your room a heap nicer than any of the rest of my boarders, Miss Hewlet," continued the landlady. "I wish they were all like you—you don't give me no trouble at all. There's them Biddle gals—they're off to work in the bindery just as soon as they get their breakfast, and never get home till dark. They don't snug up at all. And there's Baldwin and his wife—they're just as dirty as pigs. He is drunk half his time. I don't see where he gets money to pay his board; but he does pay, or he couldn't stay in my house a minute! Dear me! how the wind blows! Don't it make you think of your man off to sea?"

"Yes—I think of him very often, particularly in a storm like this," said Mrs. Hewlet. And her voice quivered, and her dark eyes looked as if a word more would set them afloat in tears.

"I dare say. Well, I reckon I'm better off without any man to fret about," said Mrs. Larkins.

And again she squeezed a sigh from her dry heart.

"Sissy, won't you come and see me?" she now said, reaching out her thin, skinny hand toward the child.

"Sissy not my name—my name Rosy!" said the child, with a pout.

"Well, Rosy, then, won't you come and sit in my lap?"

"No; you dirty—me clean!" said the little truth-teller.

"Well, I never! That child is smart; but a woman can't keep clean and work as I do!" said Mrs. Larkins, abashed by the implication against her cleanly appearance. "And I suppose I must be off at it again. I must be wicked, though I go to meetin' every Sunday; for I get no rest, and the preacher says there's no rest for the wicked. You must be lonesome up here in your room alone all the time. Why don't you come down and see me once in a while, Miss Hewlet?"

"Thank you. I am not lonely. I read and sew, and have Rosy to talk to. She is out of the way here, and can neither get hurt nor do mischief!" replied the lady, as Mrs. Larkins ruck and went out.

When they were alone, she called the sweet child to her, and taking her in her lap, kissed her, and said:

"Rosy dear, you must never tell any one they are dirty again, as you did Mrs. Larkins."

"Mussn't Rosy tell trufe, muzzer?" asked the little one, looking up in her mother's eyes.

"Yes, my child, I have always taught you to tell the truth; but still, remember, if you see any one dirty, you need not speak of it."

"Yes, muzzer; but Rosy mussn't sit in deir lap, must she?"

"No, my pet—not without I tell you to."

"When is papa comin' home, muzzer?"

"In a few weeks, I hope my child. In a few weeks, if nothing happens to him."

And she bent her head over the child, and kissed her tenderly, first brushing away the tear-drops that were brimming her eyes, lest they should fall upon her sweet little one's face, and call for the questioning which it would pain her to answer.

CHAPTER XIII.

Frank Hewlet's struggle for life weakened him very much, and he was confined to her bed for three or four days after he was carried to the house of Mr. Drummond. But he was well attended to by Mr. Drummond and his servants, though not a little vexed that the fair Rosalette did not officiate as nurse, or send to make special inquiry after him.

He had been told by Mr. Drummond how his life had been saved by Ethelbert at fearful risk, when no one else would volunteer; and he had, of course, expressed his great gratitude to Mr. Drummond. To Ethelbert he could not; for the young man did not come near him. Whether he felt any gratitude or not, the future alone can show.

Every day Betsy Hunt found time to come all the way from the village to ask how he was, and to bring him some delicacy, which her mother always sent—so she said—though he well knew that her own fair hands had prepared it. But he cared little for her attentions. He looked for richer game.

On the fifth day after the wreck, Captain Hewlet was able to leave his room, and then, for the first time after his rescue, he saw Ethelbert. Common gratitude alone would have impelled him to acknowledge his deep indebtedness to the savior of his life. But his manner was icy cold when he said:

"I have to thank you, sir, for risking so much to save a life so valueless as mine."

"You need not allude to it, sir. I should have done as much for any other man, white or black."

And, after saying this, young Drummond turned and walked away, leaving his father and sister to entertain the captain.

And at that instant a servant came to tell Mr. Drummond that a mechanic who was building an addition to his house wished to see him. The old gentleman rose and followed the servant, and thus Hewlet found himself left alone with Rosalette. He was not at all annoyed by this; in truth, he rather liked it. For he thought that his recent peril and present feebleness might arouse some feeling of sympathy in the bosom of the fair girl before him, which might cause her to listen favorably to words which he had more than once sought an opportunity to utter.

"How calm and lovely the weather appears after the terrible storm in which I so nearly lost my life!" he said, as he took a seat near that occupied by Rosalette, who was engaged over some embroidery.

"The weather is indeed fine," said Rosalette, quietly.

"Did you witness the wreck of the 'Soud'?" he asked.

"I did," was her response, given very quietly.

"Then you saw your brave brother when he ventured to my rescue?"

"No. At that moment I was attending upon one whose very life seemed so linked with peril that I feared she would die before you were rescued, if you were rescued at all."

"I do not know who could be possibly so interested in my life," said Hewlet, with a well-assumed air of surprise. "Pray, tell me who exhibited such great anxiety on my account?"

"The same poor, loving, faithful girl that has called here daily to ask after your health, since you have been in my father's house."

"Oh! you mean Betsy Hunt. I don't know why she should make a fool of herself on my account. I am sure she is nothing to me."

Rosalette's blue eye, usually so quiet and calm, flashed, and an indignant reply was almost on her lips; but she repressed it, and said:

"No young lady would be apt to exhibit such feelings without she had received some encouragement."

"Encouragement? Why, if common politeness, such as is ever due from a gentleman to the fairer and better sex, is encouragement, then I have encouraged Miss Hunt in her attachment for my humble self, if she really possesses any," said Hewlet.

Rosalette wished to reply to him, but she dared not trust herself to do so, for she would at once have told him that she knew he had pretended to love Betsy; and if he did not, that he had, with gross cruelty, trifled with her affections. Therefore she remained silent.

"There is but one person in this world," said Hewlet, after a pause—"but one person in this world whose love I court. Failing to possess her love, I would rather a thousand times perish in the ocean than to wed another!"

Rosalette's eyes were on her embroidery, and she did not see the bold and ardent glance which accompanied his words.

Hewlet thought that she must understand his allusion, and that her quiet proceeded from a desire to hear more.

"When death was before me, I feared him not. But I struggled for life that I might tell her, who had won all of my heart's deep love, and hear from her lips my doom. If she told me that my love was returned—then life would be a blessing worth having struggled for—if not, then it had been a weakness to cling to a life whose future could only be dark—darker than death and its oblivious pall!"

Rosalette heard all this, and yet seemed not to hear it.

Hewlet grew bolder, or, perhaps, more desperate.

"Your love, fairest and best of ladies, is all I crave on earth in return for a devotion that is as boundless as the universe!" he cried, as he bent his knee before her.

She raised her eyes now from her work, and he saw no glance of love in their flashing depths. Rising from her seat, she said, in a coldly, bitter tone:

"Captain Hewlet, accident has made you my father's guest. It is but a poor return for his hospitality that you insult his daughter. The words of love you have used to poor Betsy Hunt, need not to have been stereotyped for my use."

"On my word, fair lady, I mean no insult!" he cried, as he rose to his feet. "I love you, and only you!"

Rosalette did not wait to hear his excuses, or his reiterations of love. With an air of offended dignity, she left the room, Hewlet standing and gazing after her in angry wonder. He was not used to rebuffs in his wooings.

His face darkened with anger when he found himself alone.

"By all that's good above, and bad below, proud girl, you shall rue this hour!" he muttered, between his gnashing teeth. "Scorn me as you will, you yet shall be my bride. By fair means or foul, you shall yet be encircled by my arms; and once in my power, no tears or honeyed words shall soften the bitterness of my revenge. I can hate as well as love, fair lady; and those who feel my hate need seek no hotter hell on earth! As to Betsy Hunt, if she loves me so much, she shall pay me for throwing her shadow in my path in this case. She is a pretty little fool, after all. If she had old Drummond's fortune to look to, I wouldn't care if she did love me. I must leave these quarters now, for I expect Miss Rosalette will tell her proud brother what I have said, and, perhaps, her father and they'll call it presumption on the part of a shipwrecked captain to make love to an heiress. I must be off to the sign of the Golden Anchor, where I can study out a plan to bring this cautious lady-bird into my net; for there she must come at last. That is sworn to."

"What! all alone here, Captain Hewlet," said Mr. Drummond, returning at this moment.

"Yes, sir; Miss Rosalette was called away, and I saw your son just mounted for a ride."

"Ah! Well, how do you feel to-day?"

"So much better, sir, that I think I will no longer intrude upon your hospitality, but take up my quarters down at the tavern until I can find another vessel, if I can be trusted with another after this streak of bad luck."

"Poh—poh, Hewlet; you're welcome to stay here as long as you like. My house is as free as air to you."

"I know that your kind heart prompts you to say so, sir; but I am well now; and, to speak the truth, I know that your son, for some reason unknown to me, dislikes me, and I feel too grateful to him to oppress him with my presence."

"Poh—don't mind the boy's little whims. He'll soon grow out of 'em. If he knew you as well as I do, he'd like you. He has taken a prejudice without knowing why, and it will soon wear off."

Perhaps so; but still I would rather go down to Hunt's and stay for a while, though I deeply appreciate your generosity."

"Well, well, do as you like. I'll either build or buy another vessel for you very soon. Take a glass of wine before you go. If you are not strong enough to walk, I'll have my chaise got out and carry you down."

"Thank you, Mr. Drummond, I am quite able to walk," replied Hewlet. "I will not put you to the trouble."

"It will be no trouble. I have got to go down at any rate. I want to give directions to have poor Mrs. Alden put on my pension-list, and Ramsay's mother, and the rest who have been bereaved by the loss of my vessel. She and her whole cargo were well insured, and I can afford to help the poor creatures."

"You have a big heart, Mr. Drummond."

"Poh! I'm only doing my duty, as my boy said when he plunged over the cliff to try and save you. But come, we'll take some wine and a bit of bread and cheese, while my stable-man puts the horse to the chaise, and then I'll drive you down in a jiffy. I'm glad to see you about so soon. You was pretty nearly done for when you was hauled up out of the water."

"That's true, sir; but I feel as if I could take another swim for life, if occasion called for it," said Hewlet, as he followed Mr. Drummond to his luncheon-room.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mr. Drummond had just driven off toward the village with Captain Hewlet in his carriage, when Ethelbert passed them on his return from a short gallop over the hills. Riding up to the door, he dismounted from his well-trained animal, which instantly trotted off to the stable. Upon entering the house he met Rosalette, and his quick, searching glance, in an instant, detected signs which plainly told that she had been weeping.

"What is the matter with my pet sister?" he asked, tenderly, as putting one arm around her slender waist, he led her to a sofa, and sat down by her side.

"Nothing, brother—but I am glad you have returned!"

"Sister, you have been weeping!"

"Not much, brother. We women always cry if anything annoys us—no matter how trifling the annoyance is!"

"Sister, you are not apt, easy-natured girl that you are, to be annoyed by trifles. I know that something unpleasant has occurred to you during my absence. Have I not a right to your confidence?"

"Yes, dear brother, but there is nothing that need trouble you."

"Anything which has troubled you, Rosalette, troubles me, and I shall feel hurt if you do not tell me what has drawn tears from your eyes!"

Rosalette felt pained that her brother should so insist upon knowing the cause of her recent annoyance, for she could not refuse to tell him, and she feared that he would rudely resent the words that Hewlet had used.

"Promise me, brother, that you will be satisfied with my explanation, and then let the matter drop, and I will tell you!" she said.

"Well, sister, I promise. But if I find that you have been wronged by any one, I will not answer for any mental reservation which I may make!"

"My wrongs will not require a champion!" said Rosalette, with a smile. "The truth is, brother, Captain Hewlet, with an audacity which may be peculiar to sailors, attempted to make love to me. But it was a futile attempt, for my rebuke was quickly given, and so sharp, that he very suddenly concluded to change his quarters!"

"Ah—I met him riding toward the village with father, and now I know why he looked so flushed and angry. The poor devil must have been crazed with his recent dripping to think that you would listen to words of love from him!"

"I think so! You are not angry, brother?"

"No—he is already punished! I only feel contempt for him. But he must annoy you no more; if he does, he will be sorry for it!"

"I do not fear that he will, brother! I think I put ice on the fire of his passion when I told him that he presumed on his position as a guest in my father's house to insult me with words of love! I did not wait to hear his answer, but left the room."

"Father does not know of it?" suggested Ethelbert.

"Not without Hewlet has told him. I would not on any account, and I hope you will not!" replied Rosalette.

"I certainly shall not inform him of it, if the fellow presumes no further!" said Ethelbert. "I never can bear the thought, my sister, of your being wooed and won by a man who can call you wife. I am selfish, I know; but I think I love you as brother never loved before. If you were not my sister, my devotion would extend to madness if I was not loved in return."

"You know that I dearly love you, brother," said Rosalette, almost trembling beneath the eager passionate gaze of his dark eyes. "If you had perished in your brave action the other day, the same grave would have held my form."

Ethelbert made no reply, but holding one of his sister's hands in his own hot palm, he seemed to be musing about something foreign to what she was saying.

"Has it never seemed strange to you, sister, that our father never will speak to us about our mother?" said Ethelbert, after a long pause.

"If I question him on that subject, it seems to pain him, and he always turns away, or changes the theme of conversation. He says she died when we were too young to remember her; yet at times, as if in a dream, I think I see a tall and stately lady, with great black eyes, and hair as dark as night, with proud yet mournful mien, gazing at me. And it seems as if I called her mother!"

"It is a fancy, Ethelbert, I know; for I, too, seem to look back dreamily to a lovely, golden-haired, blue-eyed woman, whom I called mamma—and yet it could not be. We could not have two mothers, and yet be brother and sister!"

"It is strange, and I often think of it, and ask father how mother looked. But he never will tell me. He says always: 'Do not speak of her—she sleeps in her grave.' And if I persist, he gets angry, and leaves me. There is some mystery about it, or I am sure father would be more communicative."

"Perhaps so. I have heard father say that he had many and heavy troubles before he came to this country; but when he alludes to them, he seems so sad and sorrowful that I never question him. I always sing for him, or read some lively book, and try to chase the clouds from his brow."

"You're a sweet creature, Rosy—you have a far better disposition than I!"

"Ah, Ethelbert, you flatter me. I envy you your courage and coolness. I am a poor, timid, little thing, trembling almost at my own shadow!"

"Our natures are different as our looks!" said Ethelbert, and again he went to musing.

"If I ever go to England, where we were born, I will find out all about our mother!" said he, after another long pause. "Father has been there twice since I can remember, and though he never speaks of them, I am almost sure we must have relatives there!"

"I care not if we have. You and father are the only relatives that I know or desire to know!" said Rosalette.

"Darling—your love requires but little scope!" said Ethelbert, kissing her fondly. "And I am glad that we two can fill your dear heart, for from our loves you can know no wrong!"

CHAPTER XV.

"Can you rest easy until I build another vessel for you to take charge of, Hewlet?" asked Mr. Drummond, as he and the captain rode from his house to the village.

"I could, but I have some thought of leaving the sea and setting up in some other business. I am five or six thousand dollars ahead of the world, in money, and I think if I lay it out to advantage, I may do well at something less perilous than going to sea!" replied Hewlet.

"You'll change your mind when you've been ashore a month or two!" said Mr. Drummond. "I never knew a thoroughbred sailor who could content himself ashore after he had followed the sea as long as you have!"

"Why, you seem to lead a life ashore very contentedly, Mr. Drummond! And I'm sure you've been a thorough-bred seaman!" said Hewlet, quietly.

"I am far from contented on shore. I often long for the excitement of past days!" said Mr. Drummond, with a sigh. "But for my children's sake, I have given up all thoughts of an ocean life!"

"They may marry soon, and then you would have nothing to keep you back from the life of your choice."

"They marry!—why, they're children yet, and I hope marriage will never enter their thoughts," said Mr. Drummond, hastily.

"Both of them are of marriageable age, and it would be strange if thoughts of matrimony had not entered their heads before this!" said Hewlet. "And the desire of almost every parent is to see their children well 'settled' in life; and I believe that marrying well is considered the chief end to be attained."

"If that is so, I am not like the most of parents," said Mr. Drummond, abruptly.

"I am sure that your daughter, with her gentle and affectionate disposition, would make an excellent wife, and, I doubt not, a happy one."

"What do you know of my daughter's disposition, sir?" asked Mr. Drummond, almost angrily.

"I really know nothing, sir; but judge from her amiable and affable manners—from her ever smiling and happy face."

"Well, well! We will talk about something else. Can you remember what wages were due the crew when they perished?"

"Yes, sir; very nearly."

"Then I want you to make out a list of the amount due to each man, so that I can pay it over to their relatives. After that I shall allot pensions to those who were dependent upon the poor fellows who have perished in my service."

"I will do it immediately, sir. I believe it is better to die in your service than that of the Government. You do not wait for petitions and Acts of Congress to spur you to your generous acts—no per cent grasping agents act as go-betweens to rob the recipients of your favor of half their allowance."

"Here we are, at the sign of the 'Golden Anchor'. Will you get out here, or go to the store to make out the list?" said Mr. Drummond.

"I'll get out here, sir, if you please. I have a room here with some of my clothes and writing-materials in it," replied Hewlet.

"Napoleon!" shouted Mr. Hunt, who appeared at the door at this moment. "Napoleon, come and hold Mr. Drummond's horse!"

"You need not mind that, Mr. Hunt; I'm only going to drop Captain Hewlet with you, and shall then drive around to the store."

"Oh, do get out and try some of my new cider, or a rum-nogg, or a gin-sling, Mr. Drummond," said Nehemiah, beseechingly.

"Thank you; I'll drop in by-and-by, maybe," said Mr. Drummond, as he drove on, Hewlet having alighted.

"Well, captaining, I'm all-fired glad to see you out so soon," said Mr. Hunt, reaching out his hand to Hewlet. "You had a narrow chance and a lucky get-out of it—didn't you?"

"Yes; a pretty close shave, friend Hunt. Is my old room unoccupied?"

"Sartin it is. Betsy wouldn't let me sleep in it, let alone a stranger. Napoleon—you Napoleon!"

"Wall, here I be. What's wantin' now, Nehemiah?" said Steve, ducking his head, with a snuffle to Captain Hewlet.

"Run and tell Betsy that Captain Hewlet has come, and wants his old room ready for him."

"I reckon she knows it a'ready. I seen her a peakin' out of the parlor wiunder when Mr. Drummond driv up," said Steve. "But I'll go and tell her, at any rate."

And Steve shuffled off, to be called back the next instant, as usual, by Mr. Hunt.

"Git some fresh eggs and a pitcher of new milk," said Mr. Hunt. "I know the captaining would like a nogg—wouldn't ye, now, captaining?"

"I certainly like such splendid egg-noggs as you make, friend Hunt. I'll go to my room—for I have some writing to do for Mr. Drummond—and you can send one up when it is made."

"Sartin—sartin!" said Mr. Hunt, well pleased at the flattery. "Gitin' half-drowned hasn't altered you a mite, captaining."

The neatest room in that house was the one which Captain Hewlet always occupied when he was on shore. It overlooked the coziest of flower-gardens, and its window was shaded by honeysuckles, carefully trained to embower it. A neat, home-made carpet was on the floor; the chairs were dusted; upon the table was a vase of flowers; and the bed, with its snow-white counterpane, its spotless sheets and pillows, and its deep-fringed dimity curtains, looked as if the Prince of Wales, or "any other man", could not but be content with it.

"Well, this is a little better than soaking in salt water alongside of poor Harry Alden," said Hewlet, as he seated himself in a cushioned chair and looked out through the clustering honeysuckles, and the pinks, and dahlias that bloomed below. "My little Betsy has kept my room neat—just as I left it. I suppose she puts fresh flowers on the table every day. Poor little fool, she is—"

A light, bounding step warned him to stop speaking his thoughts aloud; and, the next moment, Betsy Hunt came in with a white pitcher of foaming egg-nogg and a glass on a tray.

"Bless you, my sweet little rosebud, how glad I am to see you!" cried the captain, as Betsy placed the pitcher on the table.

And he caught her in his arms, and pressed a dozen or more warm, passionate kisses on her red lips.

"O captain! how can you do so?" she cried, struggling very feebly to release herself.

"Why, darling, you mustn't refuse me a kiss or two now, when I have been so near lost to you forever," he said, as he sat down again and drew her, blushing, to a seat upon his knee.

"Oh, it was terrible!" she said, shuddering. "I almost died with terror while you were in danger, and then nearly died of joy after you were saved. But I was so afraid you wouldn't get over it. You looked as if you would die after all, when they carried you into Mr. Drummond's. I know it was foolish, and perhaps it was wrong, but I couldn't help going there every day to ask after you."

"I was sorry you did, upon only one account," said Hewlet. "It gave that proud minx, Miss Drummond, a chance to laugh at you."

"Did she laugh at me?" asked Betsy.

"I wouldn't speak of it if she had not, you know," replied Hewlet.

"Cruel! I never will speak to her again as long as I live!" said Betsy, half-criying.

"I would not, if I were in your place," said Hewlet. "But don't fret about it, darling. I have good news for you. I never mean to go to sea again. I am well enough off to live on shore, and I don't mean to run any more such risks as that which I last passed through."

"Oh, I am so glad to hear you say so! Will you always live here?"

"No; I think I shall go into business in New York. Wouldn't you like to live there? It is a beautiful city, and every night you could go to the theatre, the opera, or to balls. Would you be happy there, my pet?"

And again, unreprieved, he pressed his lips to hers.

"If I were your wife, I would be happy anywhere—even in a dungeon!" she said, in a low whisper.

A shadow gathered on his brow, but smiling, he said:

"My wife you shall be, darling, just as soon as circumstances permit. I should long since have asked you to become so, had not peculiar circumstances deterred me. I have an uncle in New York, who is worth over a hundred thousand dollars, and he will make me his heir if I marry according to his wishes. He has already made his will, but if I was to marry against his will, he would alter it, and not leave me a cent. Now, I want that money; for if I had it, we could live in comfort and luxury the rest of our lives, and I need never toil for the means to do so. I would marry you to-day if it was not for that; and, as it is, my desire is, to marry you privately, so that he never will know it, and then when he dies I will still be his heir."

Eagerly poor Betsy's ears drank in every word which the wily villain uttered. Never before had he seemed more fond and tender. Never before had her young heart fluttered more wildly in her bosom. Never before had he spoken to her of marrying. And now she thought she knew the reason. Poor child! Little did she dream of the character of that cold, consummate, heartless wretch. Now, in her blind love, she not only received his fiery kisses with pleasure, but returned them—not with his passionate ardor, but with sufficient warmth to

tell him that her pure and guileless heart was all his own.

"His 'uncle' was only a newly-invented fiction, formed to enable him the better to carry out designs more consonant with the character of an infernal fiend from Hades than that of a human being who had a soul to save or lose.

"I shall go to the city when I have settled up with Mr. Drummond and my health is perfectly restored," said Hewlet. "Will my sweet Betsy go with me? We can there be married privately, and can live as happily as two doves, without my uncle ever dreaming that I have disobeyed his wishes."

"If father and mother are willing, I will go—oh, so gladly!" said Betsy, and her blue eyes looked volumes of love as they timidly gazed up into his face.

"If it is a word that Love has not got in its vocabulary, my pet," said Hewlet, in his low, soft, winning tone.

"Cannot we be married here by good Elder Noble?" asked Betsy. "I am sure father and mother would be willing."

"Then the whole village would know of it, and the news would reach my uncle's ears before I could get to New York, and he would alter his will, and never leave me a cent. He is not healthy, and will not live long, and our marriage must be kept secret until he dies, then I would gladly have the whole world know of it. Now, if you love me, you will not refuse to go with me to New York, where I can get a minister to marry us who will keep our secret until it is proper to reveal it."

"If I love you, Frank! Oh, you know I do. But I must have the consent of my father and mother to go. It would break their hearts if I disobeyed them."

"Old hearts are like old chickens—tough, my dear. We never hear of their breaking," said Hewlet, with a smile. "If we are to keep our marriage secret, you will have to slip off without any one knowing where you go, or who you go with. In a few months, or a year or two at most, my uncle will die, and then you can come back in a carriage, my beautiful and openly-acknowledged wife, and give your father money enough to make him comfortable for life without keeping tavern."

Betsy studied and hesitated. And the woman who hesitates where her honor is concerned, is lost.

"Let me think of it—let me think of it," said Betsy, pressing her hand to her brow. "I love you, Frank, would die for you—but I want to do right!"

"Certainly, my own darling, and not for worlds would I ask you to do wrong. Come: help me to drink my egg-nogg. Bless the glass with your sweet lips, or, good as your father makes it, the beverage will taste like vinegar to me."

Betsy smiled and just touched her lip to the rim of the glass which he had filled. He took it and drank it then, saying, "Here is to the hour, my own sweet Betsy, that makes you my bride!"

And when he put the emptied glass down, he again tasted the "nectar of her lips."

Ah, why, when the libertine is thus charming his intended victim, even as a serpent charms the bird which it means to devour, is there not a guardian-angel to dash a sword of flame between them—some pitying spirit to interfere and save her who is too pure for suspicion, too weak to be prudent—too fond to weaken from her dream of bliss, until the storm of sorrow and the tempest of remorse and the wild night of anguish are upon her.

CHAPTER XVI.

It was nearly a week after Hewlet had left the house of Mr. Drummond. All traces of the late gale had vanished. The weather had become fine, and many of the villagers had sought along the shore for the bodies of Alden, Ramsay, and the steward. But in vain. They had either sunk in the sea, been torn in fragments by the surf upon the rocks, or, perhaps, been devoured by the lawyers of the ocean—the voracious sharks. Poor Kate had gone with the searching parties, she would take no denial, and she deeply grieved over their failure. But her grief was not noisy or demonstrative. She who had been the gayest of the gay, was now silent, pale, and sad—so sad that her friends said her heart was broken.

She listened with quiet respect to the consoling words of the minister, and said:

"You are very kind, sir; Mr. Drummond has been very kind; all the neighbors seem to be

trying to see who can do most for me; but it cannot bring back my Harry. You tell me, sir, not to grieve. I cannot help it. It is my only comfort. My heart doesn't ache so bad after I have had a good cry! He was such a good husband, sir, even if he wasn't a church member. If he even swore, it was not before me. He left off chewing tobacco and drinking liquor, to please me! Oh, Harry, Harry, if it was not for our poor baby, I would rather be by your side in the cold, dark sea, than here!"

Ethelbert, on this day, took his sailboat—or rather his yacht, for it measured ten or eleven tons, and ought to be dignified with that title, and with Captain Hadley for a companion, took a short trip outside the harbor. His boat, "The Mercury," was like its namesake, a "model" for beauty and speed. He had tried in vain to have Rosalette go with him. In his rides on horseback, she was ever his graceful and fearless companion. In his walks, she was ever by his side. And, hitherto, she had accompanied him when he went sailing. But she shuddered, as she remembered what she had seen upon the ocean so lately, and she prayed him not to urge her to go out upon the treacherous element, and not himself to venture far from the little harbor. This he promised, to quiet her fears when he started.

She was lonely when he went away. Her father was down to the village, and she thought she would walk down to the sea-shore where she might look out and see her brother's vessel; the walk had often been chosen by her, for, until the time of the shipwreck, she had delighted in looking out upon the rolling waves of the ocean—in listening to the roar of the surges as they broke against the granite rocks which barred their progress.

She had a favorite seat, gained by a narrow path, which, winding down among the precipitous rocks, ended in a little clump of cedars which grew upon a scanty platform of soil, right upon the verge of a ledge which almost overhung the ocean. Hither she went on this occasion, and though concealed from his view by the thick cedars, she could plainly see her brother's yacht three or four miles out in the offing, tossing lazily up and down on the great, smooth waves, for there was scarcely any breeze stirring. Seated on a moss-covered rock she gazed off upon the snowy sails of the pleasure-boat and the palish-green waters of the sea, and thought how vastly different they had appeared when lashed into madness by the wild, strong wind. So absorbed was she in thought that she did not hear the steps of a person descending the narrow path by which she had come until that person was within a few feet of her, and then, so alarmed was she at his presence there, that, could she have passed him in the narrow pathway, she would have fled in terror from the spot where she now stood trembling. For, upon hearing him, she had sprung from her seat on the rock. It was Hewlet.

"Do not let me disturb you, fair lady," said he with a kind of sarcastic politeness. "Pray, be seated again. I admire your taste in seeking such a romantic seclusion for your meditations."

"You will oblige me, sir, by returning up the hill to a spot where I can pass you, and then you can enjoy the romance of this seclusion by yourself, to your heart's content!" said she, haughtily.

"The 'romantic seclusion' would lose all its charm if you departed, Miss Drummond!" said Hewlet, with a sardonic smile. "Really, this is a most interesting tableau."

"If you are a man, sir, you will permit me to depart, and that immediately!" she cried angrily.

"Being a man, and the victim of her enchanting and captivating power, I feel very much like holding the only advantage which I ever possessed over Miss Drummond, and compelling her to listen to a few words which I must say before I tear myself, all unwillingly, from her presence!"

"You can have nothing to say, sir, which I wish to hear!"

"You do not know, fair lady. I have a wonderful knack of getting at secrets. I, in truth, possess one which would astonish even you, and, perhaps, make you feel grateful to such a contemptible being as I am if I revealed it to you!"

"I wish to share none of your secrets, sir. I only wish freedom to leave this place!"

"You look queenly in your anger, lady. A coronet would well become your snowy brow. And if you knew all that I know, a coronet might yet be there."

"If you do not let me pass, sir, I will scream to my brother. He is off there in his yacht!"

"Your lungs, fair lady, are not sufficiently strong to send a cry forth that will reach his ear. But you need not be alarmed. I mean you no present harm. If I did, it would be an easy thing for me to toss you off this cliff. I love you too well to wish to harm you, and I would not force you now to listen to me, if you would be a willing listener to me elsewhere!"

"Sir, if you will let me go from here, you may speak to me in my father's house."

"I fear that our conversation might be interrupted there; so excuse me if I insist upon saying what I have to say, here."

"Very well, sir; remember that you speak to a pained and unwilling listener, and let your words be brief!"

"As brief as possible, Miss Drummond. I have said that I possessed a secret, in which you are deeply interested. Were you the possessor of it, you would leave this country in a week, and go where not only fortune, but title, awaits you! Ah, I see you are interested!"

"No, sir; only amused by the shallowness of the fiction you are inventing!"

"On my life, lady, it is no fiction! You think you are the daughter of Thomas Drummond!"

"Think it, sir! Do I not know it?" cried Rosalette. "Have I not known my dear father since I could lispen the name of father?"

"And yet this much I tell you, he is not your father. Your father has been dead for years, but your mother lives!"

"My mother? Man, why do you mock me?"

And Rosalette sunk trembling to the rock which had been her seat before he came.

"If you wish, lady, you can now return. I will not bar your passage any longer!" said Hewlet, who saw that she almost feared to disbelieve him. And he turned as if he intended to depart.

"Stay, Captain Hewlet!" she gasped. "Stay for one moment. In manly mercy tell me that you have said what you have, merely to terrify me; that it is not true!"

"Miss Drummond, as surely as I live and stand before you, I have spoken the truth!"

"Can you prove it? Can you tell me where I can find my mother, if she really is living?"

"I can!"

"Then do, do, and I will bless you forever!" cried the poor girl, beseechingly.

"Lady, I am not mercenary, but in this matter I have my price."

"Name it, sir; and if I have or can beg the means of my father—"

"Of Mr. Drummond, I presume you mean—your father, as I have told you before, is dead."

"Of Mr. Drummond, then! I have jewels, too—you shall have them all."

"Lady, there is but one jewel which will purchase my secret. Your hand once mine, and you shall know all; nay, in one week you shall be speeding to the arms of a mother who will rejoice to again clasp in her arms her long-lost child!"

"Captain Hewlet, you are deceiving me! Failing in your first manner of approach to me, you have invented this story to try to win me by deception. You cannot succeed, sir. I never, never will be yours. I do not love you—never can!"

"Miss Drummond, your own heart tells you that there is truth in my story. In what particular do you resemble either Thomas Drummond or his son Ethelbert?"

"Oh, do not tell me that Ethelbert is not my own dear brother!"

"He is no more your brother than I am! Yet he is Thomas Drummond's son. Have they not the same dark flashing eyes—the same dark complexion—the same fiery natures when once aroused? In nothing are you like them, except in such habits as your life-time residence with them would form."

Rosalette thought of a thousand things in a moment; of the conversation which she had held so lately with Ethelbert on the mystery which their father ever held over the memory of their mother. And her heart, indeed, seemed to tell her that Hewlet spoke some truth; and that which she would give anything but her hand to know.

"If you still doubt my word, Miss Drummond, I can give you a way of knowing that I possess this secret. But if I do, you must solemnly promise to me not to reveal either to Mr. Drummond, or to his son, Ethelbert, one word which I have communicated to you to-day, until I give you my written or verbal consent so to do."

"I do so solemnly promise you, Captain Hewlet," she replied.

"I will take your word, Miss Drummond; for I feel that it is as sacred as would be your oath. When your father and brother are together, sing, as if you were merely humming over some verse of an old ballad, these words:

"In Castle Delorme, there dwelt a knight
As true as his own bright steel—
With a nodding plume and a courtly mien,
And golden spurs upon his heel—
And a lady fair, with golden hair,
And eyes of an azure hue,
Who loved the knight, so gallant and brave—
The knight to his love so true!"

"Those words," continued Hewlet, "will so agitate Mr. Drummond, that you will know that he possesses a secret that he has, and must, and will, if he can, forever hide from you. He will ask where you learned them. Tell him that you dreamed them, and possibly my deep and sincere attachment which now so offends you, may impel you in future, without hope of reward, to let you know more than I have done. And now, lady, I humbly ask you to forgive me for having followed you here, and force this interview. I would not be rude to you, but in my despair I knew no other way to gain your ear. I pray you to forgive me, and I will never again enter your presence unbidden—never again intrude upon you without your desire!"

And Hewlet knelt, and looked so humble and pale, that Rosalette felt sorry for him, and said:

"I forgive you sincerely, Captain Hewlet; and so far as I may be, will be your friend. But remember, I can be nothing more!"

He answered only with a sigh. Then he turned to go. But a thought seeming to strike him, he said:

"If Miss Drummond should desire to see me before I leave Leighton, which will be in ten or twelve days, a note addressed to me and hidden in this ledge beneath this stone, will cause me to obey her wishes."

And he raised a small flat stone in a crevice in the rocks near his hand as he spoke.

She bowed her head, and he turned away, and disappeared as quickly and as silently as he had come.

Rosalette staggered back to the mossy rock, and burying her sweet face between her small white hands, she wept and sobbed like a child suddenly left parentless.

"Ethelbert not my brother!" she sobbed. "Oh has it been a sin to love him as I have loved—to have received his burning kisses on my brow and lips? It cannot be true—and yet my heart—my trembling heart keeps telling me that it is. I will sing those words—I never can forget them—before my father, or Mr. Drummond, and if they affect him, I will believe all that Captain Hewlet has told me. O my fair haired, blue-eyed mother, I know I have dreamed of you! It will be hard for me to keep my promise and not to tell Ethelbert what I have heard; but it is made, and shall be kept. Oh that I knew all! That I could go and see my mother, if indeed she lives. But a breeze is springing up, and Ethelbert is returning to the harbor. I must go back, for he will soon be home!"

And Rosalette, with a far heavier step than that with which she descended the pathway, went slowly and sadly back to the cottage in the Pines.

CHAPTER XVII.

When Hewlet returned to his room after his interview with Rosalette Drummond, his dark face was radiant with pleasure.

"I shall win her yet—in my own good time she will be mine!" said he to himself. "She believes me; and I know just enough of Old Drummond's secret to enable me to carry out my plans, and to make her think I know much more than I do. She forgot her pride in a hurry when I began to make revelations, and by working the card of humility and despairing love—quite a good one, by the way, with your tender hearted sympathetic women—I will in a proper time so win upon her, that she will, to gain all the secret, become Mrs. Hewlet. But it will be a work of time. I will have plenty of time meanwhile to coax my little Betsy off to the city; and that, too, I shall so work, that not the least suspicion will fall on me. My old partner at cards, Nelse Randall, has promised to come, *en masque*, and help me in that matter. All that I have got to do is, to win Betsy to my plan, and that will be easy; for the poor little fool loves the very ground I walk upon. She is like a moth fluttering around

a candle—there it will flutter till it gets its wings scorched—then down it drops. Well—but there comes the little pet, singing like a nightingale.

"Come in here, Betsy—sit down darling—I have something to tell you."

"Well, you must tell me soon, dear Frank, for it is almost tea-time, and I have got to set the table."

"I have hit upon a plan, my love," said Hewlet, and he drew her down upon his knee, "by which you can leave the village without specially alarming any one, and without in any way compromising me. So that I can return and see how your folks are for you; and they will have no suspicion that you are with me at all, until it will be right and proper for us to come out above-board, and let them know that we are married, which will be as soon as my precious uncle dies, and leaves me his wealth!"

"What is your plan, dear Frank?"

"I will tell you, my darling. A friend in whom I can place the utmost confidence; a gentleman of wealth and the highest respectability, will come here next week as a jewelry-peddler."

"As a jewelry-peddler! What for?"

"To make love to you, my dear, and sell his jewelry!"

"If he offers to make love to me, he will get his ears boxed!"

"No, he will not, my dear; for he will do it at my particular request!"

"Frank, you are cruel to jest so with me!"

And poor Betsy's eyes filled with tears, and her pouting lips quivered.

"Poor child! I do not mean to pain you. He will not make love in real earnest. He will pretend to be very much in love with you, and give you some beautiful jewelry, which really is a bridal-present from me. You will pretend to like him very much, and I shall be jealous, and will go away apparently in anger with you, but really to go to the city to prepare a house for us to live in, and to engage a minister to marry us the moment you arrive—which will be in three or four days after I leave. I shall complain of your fickleness before I go, and you will, in a day or two after, elope with my friend, leaving a letter to inform your parents that you have run away with the jeweler; when, in truth, you will come right to my arms, and be made my wife as soon as you reach me! Do you understand my plan, darling?"

"I think I do, dear Frank. But how can I endure even to appear false to you, and to receive the attentions of another?"

"For my sake, and to insure our future happiness, you can dissimulate in this case, my sweet pet!"

"For your sake, anything, dear Frank! But it will be hard. But I will try, if you are sure this friend of yours will not take any liberties with me. He must not attempt to kiss me—my lips are sacred to you only!"

"Certainly, my little angel. He is a gentleman, and my friend. Now you can go and set your tea-table, and, after your evening's work is over, we will walk out and talk my plan over, and I will tell you how to act your part in the little drama of deception."

"Yes, dear Frank; there don't kiss me any more, or my face will be so red that everybody at the table will notice it!"

"I can't help it, my sweet Betsy. My love is so strong, and your lips are so sweet!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

"You have had a dull sail to-day, brother!" said Rosalette, who, having returned in time to wash all traces of tears from her face, and to regain entire composure, before Ethelbert arrived from the village, now met him as she almost always did—excepting, however, a kiss which she generally gave him when he came back, if he had been away ever so short a time.

"Yes; there was scarcely any wind outside!" he replied. "We did not go three miles from the harbor; and there we lay becalmed for hours."

"I saw you from my little retreat among the cedars!"

"Ah! were you there? I did not see you. I suppose I might if I had used my spy-glass, and known that you were there."

"Hardly. The little thicket is so dense, and the background of rock so dark. Where is father?"

"He has just come from the village. He was driving in at the front gate when I entered the house."

"I want you to do me a favor, Ethelbert."

"What is it, dear sister? You know how ready I am to serve you."

"You have more influence with him than I have. Ask him if it would not benefit his health to take a trip to Europe. Coax him to go, and take us along!"

"Why, what has put this new kink in your head, my Rosy? I thought you the greatest little home-body that ever lived. I never before heard you express a desire to travel."

"No; well, the fit has come upon me suddenly. But it is strong; and I do most earnestly desire to see more of the world! Travel would improve both of us. I have traveled in books until I am tired of reading the adventures and impressions of others, and I want to see, and act, and feel for myself."

"In truth, so do I, sister; and I will take the first opportunity, when I find our father in a positive good-humor, to broach the subject to him."

"That is a good, kind brother. Now, excuse me. I must change my dress, and will come down by-and-by, and, after tea, we will have some music."

And away she hurried; for she did not want to trust herself too much with him now, for she kept thinking that he was not her brother, and that her love must be sinful—for she knew that she did love him almost to idolatry.

"Well, my boy, how did you enjoy your sail?" asked Mr. Drummond, who came in a few minutes after Rosalette had left the room.

"Poorly, father; there was hardly wind enough to lift the burgee at the mast-head. Captain Hadley swore a little, and whistled a good deal; but it was of no use. We crept out three or four miles, and lay there rocking an hour or two, and then we crept back again, with hardly wind enough to put steerage-way on my fleet 'Mercury'. I shall wait for a breeze before I hoist her canvas again!"

"I'd advise you to; but not such a breeze as sent the 'Scud' to pieces. Where is your sister?"

"She went to dress for tea a little while ago—but I think I hear her coming. Yes, that is her voice; she is singing as usual, gay, happy creature!"

And, a few seconds later, Rosalette came in, with apparent carelessness, singing the words which Hewlet had told her to use.

Mr. Drummond turned ashen pale, and staggered as if he had been struck by a bolt from heaven.

"Girl—girl!" he gasped, "what do you know about 'Castle Delorme'? Speak!" he added, almost fiercely.

"Dear father, what is the matter? Are you ill, or angry with your poor Rosy?"

"No, no; but that song—those words, where did you learn them?"

"What, that snatch of a ballad I was humming over as I came in, father?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Really, I must have heard it somewhere, or else dreamed it. I think so much of music when I am awake that I often dream of it when sleeping!"

"I hope it was a dream—I hope it was!" said Mr. Drummond, looking at her searchingly. Do not sing it again in my presence. It brings unpleasant recollections to me."

"I will not, purposely, father. I came to tell you that tea is ready."

"Well, go to tea with your brother. I do not feel well, and I will go and rest a little while on the lounge in the library."

"We will wait tea for you, father."

"No, child—no! Do as I bid you. Go to tea with your brother. I will join you by-and-by."

Rosalette left the room with her brother, who said, when they were out of hearing of Mr. Drummond:

"Father is strangely nervous lately. It is singular how a verse of an old ballad could affect him. What were the words, sister?"

"They're out of my mind already, Ethelbert," said Rosalette, turning away her head to hide a blush; for dissimulation was a new thing to her—she could not practice it without blushing.

CHAPTER XIX.

"It cannot be possible that Rosalette could have here learned anything about Delorme Castle!" said Mr. Drummond, nervously to himself, as he paced to and fro in his library-room. "What can have put the name in her head? I never heard of a ballad before with the name in it. Not a book or a scrap of writing, I am sure, is there in this house with the name in it. She may have dreamed it; but it is wonderful if she did. The lady with the

golden hair, too—it is wonderfully strange. She is too artless to deceive me, and never has exhibited the least suspicion that she believed herself to be anything but that which she has been always taught to consider herself, my child. She cannot possibly have any memory of a place that she has not seen since she was seven or eight months old! Yet I cannot drive her words from my mind. It cannot be that any living being could have traced her here. My supposed death on the English coast swept away all traces of me, and my changed name in this place, where no foreign traveler ever comes, has surely been a safeguard.

"And eighteen years of quiet and safety have proven that I am forgotten. The girl must, as she says, have been dreaming; but I hope she will dream no more. I will watch her closely, at any rate, and see if any one possibly could have conveyed to her a hint of the past."

"The past! How vividly it comes to me, even through the long, long years! The few brief days of bliss, unalloyed bliss—then the wrong which no time can efface, and the bitter and sudden revenge! The revenge which bowed one haughty heart to the earth, and steeped another in a sorrow which will last until she is called to rest. How it all comes up before me!"

And his face flushed, and he paced faster over the floor as he thought of it. Thus for an hour or more Mr. Drummond walked and communed with himself, and then having fully recovered his composure, he went down to the family sitting-room, where Ethelbert and Rosalette were practicing music.

They ceased when he came in, for Rosalette thought if he felt ill, the noise would annoy him; but he told them to continue, for he felt much better.

And again the duet of sweet voices filled the room with melody; but they did not sing a great while. After closing her piano, Rosalette took a seat near Mr. Drummond, and Ethelbert with a late paper in his hand, sat down, as he frequently did, to read aloud such portions of news as he found interesting. One article which he read, treated of a book of travels in Europe by an American, and gave Rosalette a fine opportunity to say:

"It must be delightful to travel! I should dearly love to take a trip abroad, if papa would only take us. I should like to go all over England."

"England!" said Mr. Drummond, with a frown. "England is the last country in the world for a pleasure-seeking traveler. The climate is cold and damp—it is wrapped in fog five-sixths of the time. Italy, the land of sun and flowers; Spain, the country of grandeur and beauty, and winy, viny, laughing dancing France will do; but England is no land to travel in."

"Yet I and Ethelbert were born there; and it is but natural to desire to see the country of our birth," said Rosalette.

"And England has associations which fill my heart with pride," said Ethelbert. "There lived and wrote a Shakespeare, a Milton, and a Byron. There was born and reared a Nelson, a Collingwood, and a Wellington. And if we go far back to the palmy days of chivalry, and read of Edward the Black Prince, of good Queen Philippa, of Hotspur Percy, of Sir John Chandos, and peerless Buckingham, we are afloat on a very sea of romance. England for me, with its fogs and smokes, so long as her history is bright, in preference to effeminate Italy, to degenerate Spain, or to mountebankish France!"

Mr. Drummond smiled sadly.

"You speak like a thorough-bred Englishman, instead of an Anglo-American, my boy!" said he. "England has her glories, but she also has spots upon her escutcheon. My English feelings have nearly died away in the many years that I have enjoyed under the flag of the most purely and truly republican government in the world. I am a naturalized American, and I feel quite as much attached to this land as I ever did to England. There, many cruel and unjust laws exist—or did while I was there, for some have since been modified. I have no wish to ever return to England again."

"I should like to see our mother's grave. Shouldn't you, Ethelbert?" said Rosalette, with a boldness which astonished herself, for it had been a forbidden subject.

"Child, you must be going crazy—you can remember nothing of your mother!" said Mr. Drummond, almost angrily. "Have I not told you before that it pains me to have the recol-

lection of past days brought to my mind? The present and the future—the present and the future, girl—is all that we have to do with."

"I did not mean to offend you. Forgive me, father," said Rosalette, humbly.

"Certainly, child; but do not do so again. Old wounds, if probed afresh, hurt more than new ones."

And Mr. Drummond rose and took his hat, and walked out upon the lawn where the bright moonlight made everything look cool and lovely.

CHAPTER XX.

The arrival of any stranger was a matter of importance at the sign of the "Golden Anchor"—it was of such rare occurrence. But the coming of a jewelry peddler, with gold and silver watches, and beautiful and delicate rings, pins, brooches, ear-rings, and with "real" diamonds, was more than extraordinary. This peddler—Mr. John Jenkins Smith, he called himself, was one of the funniest jokers that had ever been seen in Lidgetown. He won the good graces of Mr. Hunt by treating all hands in the bar-room three or four times the first hour of his stay. He took Mrs. Hunt's heart by storm, by declaring that her johnny-cake was better than any pound-cake he had ever put in his mouth. And as to Betsy, a beautiful ring sparkled on her fingers in less than two hours after his arrival; and the very same evening, a pair of magnificent ear-rings occupied the place of the little thin-worn hoops of red-dish gold, which she had inherited from her grandmother.

Her mother thought it wasn't exactly right for her to receive such rich gifts from a perfect stranger, and her father thought the peddler was "powerful liberal", to use his own language. But Betsy knew who they really came from, and received them as the bridal-presents of him whom she loved above all earthly beings—received them with better grace than she did the flattering compliments of Mr. John Jenkins Smith, who began to make love to her at every opportunity, as if he was really in earnest.

It having been Hewlet's desire that she should receive the attentions of Mr. Smith with apparent pleasure, she did so when others were present; but if left alone with him for a moment, she was as shy and timid as a newly-caught fawn in the forest in the presence of its captor. Hewlet had nothing to say to the peddler—it having been purposely arranged that Betsy should carry messages between them, so that there should not be the least evidence that they ever had been acquainted prior to that time.

Seeing what an important personage "Napoleon" was in the household, Mr. Smith presented the delighted Steve with a cheap silver watch, which elevated "Napoleon" in his own opinion far above the towering height occupied temporarily by his imperial namesake, the forsworn occupant of the French throne.

"Peddlin' must be a good business, or you couldn't afford to give away so much stuff," said Nehemiah to Mr. Smith, when the latter put a large pin—a "gold anchor" at that—in his shirt-bosom.

"A gift now and then is as good as an advertisement in a newspaper," said Mr. Smith. "If you was keepin' store, and had some first-rate tea just opened, if you gave a pound or two out to some of the talkin' sort of men and women that came to your store, they'd praise it up so that everybody would come to buy of you."

"Well, I never thought of that. It's a good idea," said Nehemiah. "Won't you have a nogg on top of it?"

"Seeing what good ones you make, I really can't refuse you, Mr. Hunt."

"Napoleon!" shouted Nehemiah.

"Wall, here I be! What's wantin'?" cried Steve, who had just purchased a broad, green ribbon for a watch-guard. "If it's the time o' day, I can tell you to a t-i-o-n-shun."

And he drew forth his silver watch with as much pride as if it had been a two hundred dollar chronometer.

"Get some eggs and ice, and be quick—I'm goin' to make a nogg for Mr. Smith."

"If it's for Mr. Smith, I'll go quicker than a streak o' chain lightning," said Napoleon, with an extra snuffle. And away he went.

"That Cap'n Hewlet, that boards here with you, has a kind of offish way with him. He is hard to get acquainted with," said the peddler while he waited for the egg-nogg.

"Yes, sometimes. He's been rather solemn-holy of late," said Mr. Hunt. "You see he lost his vessel lately, and all hands but himself were lost in her. And what's more, betwixt

you and I, I guess he's in love with my Betsy; and love always makes fellers soberer, I think, from what I've seen. And Betsy thinks a heap of him, and I shouldn't wonder if they made a match of it, for they seem dreadful thick lately. It wouldn't put me out a mite if they did; for he is uncommon smart, and is right well off, now."

"Women are ticklish creatures about love. They don't keep one mind a great while. They'll like one man first-rate for a while—think they love him to distraction—then a new face, or a man with a little more money comes along, and they're off after him, forgetting all about the first love," said Mr. Smith.

"That may be the way with city gals," said Nehemiah; "but here in the country a gal don't cut up in that way. If she did, she'd be read out of meetin' in a hurry. But there comes Napoleon with the eggs. Will you have rum or brandy in your nogg?"

"Half of both!" said Mr. Smith. "I think mixed liquors go best in an egg-nogg or a punch."

"They make the drunk come the quickest, I've noticed that," as he set to work to manufacture the nogg.

CHAPTER XXI.

Captain Hewlet went daily to the place which he had pointed out as a place of deposit for a note from Miss Rosalette Drummond, if she should desire a further interview with him. For he felt sure that he had awakened a feeling in her bosom which could not, would not, let her rest until she knew more of the secret which he either possessed or pretended to possess. And his judgment was correct. Only three days had elapsed before he found beneath the stone in the ledge of rock a tiny note evidently written with a trembling hand. It was in these words:

"CAPTAIN HEWLET:—You are a man—you should possess something of generosity and justice in your nature. After informing me of enough of a secret which you profess to have obtained, and which so nearly concerns me that I cannot make my heart feel insensible to its importance, it would be more than cruel to retain from me the knowledge so important to my present and to my future. I appeal to your sense of justice, to the chivalry which is natural to all honorable men, to the finer feelings which should be possessed by any one desirous of winning either the respect or regard of the female sex, and pray you to let me know in writing, who and where the person is whom you say is my mother and living, and who my father was, and when and where he died. If you do this, I pledge my honor that no person now on this side of the Atlantic shall know what I shall learn through you—nor shall you in any way be compromised by any word or act of mine. If you do not, I shall believe that all you have told me is false, and that you have unmanfully invented the story to try to forward your own unwelcome suit. Do not force me to a conclusion which would render you both odious and contemptible in my sight! An answer to this note, left where you find it, will be looked for with anxiety, by your respectful R. D."

A sardonic sneer and then a low laugh expressed the first feelings of Hewlet when he read this note.

"Cool!" said he, bitterly. "Very cool. If I do not reveal that which she confesses to be important to her future and present, she will consider me as having invented a falsehood for the purpose of gaining her precious hand. You never will believe it a falsehood, Miss Rosalette—not by a long ways. And she appeals to my justice and my chivalry. I don't think that where my interest is concerned, I possess either of those admirable qualities. She wants me to appear 'odious and contemptible', does she? She carries her head too high for a petitioner. I have a great mind to write a reply that would bring it down a peg or two. But policy must rule the day. I must use diplomacy, or else I shall lose a prize which I would risk much to gain! I will answer her, but not exactly according to her desires!"

And the wily villain tore a page from a memorandum-book and wrote his reply. It ran thus:

"LADY:—You seem to permit your personal repugnance to me to conquer all other feelings and even to profess to disbelieve the truth of what I have already revealed to you. And yet you ask all my secret. I have named a reward—I know it is daring for me to hope for it, yet despair and love make me bold, and I do ask it as the only condition which will fully unseal my lips. Your contempt will be painful to me—but I will bear it, if I must. You doubt still. You have tested Mr. Drummond with the lines I told you to repeat, and the effect was startling. I know that. You need not ask how I learned it, but I know it. Lady, to test my truth once more, I ask you again to sing a few words in his presence, as carelessly as before. They are these:

"Where rolls the surf on Albion's shore
In cadence stern, forevermore,
There is a dark and dismal cave
Where dwells the Demon of the Wave."

"A smuggler's haunt, the peasants say,
Who shun it both by night and day;
In truth, a dungeon and a grave—
Its guard, the Demon of the Wave."

"Though Delorme rears its turrets proud
Beneath the inland-driven cloud,
Its knightly lord sleeps his last sleep
Within that cavern drear and deep."

"If, lady, the singing of those words do not produce such an effect upon Mr. Drummond as will satisfy you that I have told you truth and only truth, though not half that I can reveal, I will never venture again to think, much less breathe the love which makes me your slave. Tell Mr. Drummond you dreamed the words, as before. FRANK HEWLET."

"P. S.—I still hold you solemnly to your promise not to reveal what I have told you. I will still hope for a more favorable answer from you; but if it comes not, in a few days I shall leave this place forever. F. H."

"There!" said Hewlet, as he folded the paper and deposited it beneath the stone. "I think that will add fuel to the flame of curiosity already burning high in Miss Rosalette's fair bosom. And if the song don't raise a storm in the cottage in the Pines, I'm mistaken. Old Drummond will think the lady a great dreamer, I reckon!"

And with a light step he hastened away.

CHAPTER XXII.

The path by which Captain Hewlet descended from his extemporized post-office to the village led him in sight of the cottage in the Pines, and an exultant smile passed over his face as he saw a white dress fluttering away along the path which led to the sea-shore, and he said:

"The lady is in a hurry for her answer!"

And he turned, quite well satisfied, down the hill toward the tavern, thinking that most likely his next visit to the ledge would be rewarded by the finding of another note from the lady, couched, perhaps, in a different tone.

He did not see that the white dress which fluttered through the trees was followed by a person in the garb of a masculine. He did not pause for that, but hurried down to the sign of the "Golden Anchor" just in time to see Miss Betsy Hunt go out riding in the neat buggy which was used to transport the person and wares of Mr. John Jenkins Smith. And Mr. Smith was driving her.

An angry flush seemed to pass over the face of Hewlet as he saw them drive off. Nehemiah Hunt saw it. He felt for the man whom he had long looked upon as his prospective son-in-law.

"That gal does go on scandalous!" said Mr. Hunt, in a tone full of indignation, and with a sympathetic look for Hewlet. "I mean to tell that durned pedler that his room will be a heap better than his company. He's given the gal a few trinkets, and they seem to have set her crazy!"

"She is not the only one who has received presents from him!" said Hewlet, abruptly, glancing at the golden anchor which was so conspicuously worn in the landlord's shirt-bosom.

"Durn the thing—I won't wear it a minnit longer," said Nehemiah, taking off the pin spitefully, and then very carefully putting it away in his pocket-book.

"Napoleon!" he shouted, very loud, though Napoleon was standing within a rod of him, watering a horse at the trough by the sign-post.

"Wall—what is it now?" replied Steve. "I ain't deaf—you'll get the lung-fever, yet, hollerin' so loud!"

"Take off that are watch what the durned pedler give you!" said Nehemiah, sternly.

"What for?" asked Steve, taking it out, looking at it fondly, and returning it to the leathern fob which he had sewed on the outside of his waistband for it.

"'Cause I don't want to see nothin' about here that ever belonged to the mean cuss!" said Mr. Hunt, angrily.

"Mean cuss? Why, he spends more money at your bar than all the rest of the folks in town!" said Steve, in astonishment.

"Durn him and his money! He may pack his duds and be off jest as soon as he comes back!" said Nehemiah, who always grew mad if any one opposed his ideas.

"You darsen't tell him so!"

"Yes I darst! And now you take off that watch, and don't make a fool of yourself no longer."

"Nehemiah—I shan't do it!" said Steve, deliberately.

And he pulled out the watch and took a long and affectionate look at it.

"It's jest two o'clock by my time!" he added triumphantly.

"If you don't do as I tell you, you can jest

quit this tavern, and that mighty quick!" shouted Mr. Hunt, turning purple in the face.

"Wall, I can quit!" said Steve, with a snuffle. "And you'll see how you kin git along without me. It's been Napoleon here and Napoleon there ever since I've worked for you. I've come at your callin' and gone at your bid-din', jest like a dog, and never growled, no matter how much I had to do! But I'll pack my duds and go—maybe the mean cuss of a peddler will find me another place!"

And Steve deliberately tied the horse, which he had brought from the stable, to the sign-post, and went into the house.

"Napoleon!" shouted Mr. Hunt, who had heard his words and watched his actions with a dumb surprise.

"Well, what is it? Speak quick, for I don't want to be loiterin' round where I ain't needed," said Steve, curtly.

"Look here—I don't want you to leave! My old woman wouldn't know how to git along if you cleared out," said Nehemiah, in a much lower tone than usual. "Let's make what they call a com-promise; you just put the watch away till the peddler is gone, and then you may wear it, and I won't say a word agin it."

"That would look pesky unthankful to him," said Steve.

"Do it, and you shall have the free run of the bar for a month," said Mr. Hunt, and now his voice and look were both beseeching.

"Well, jest to please you, Nehemiah, and 'cause I think the mississ couldn't well git along without me, I'll go and lock up the watch till the peddler goes; but I hope he'll go right soon, for I've got so used to wearin' it that I can't keep no time o' day by the old clock in the bar-room as I used to."

"He'll get a hint to go jest as soon as he comes back with Betsy," said Mr. Hunt. "I ain't goin' to stand his gallivantin' her around no longer. That's said!"

"She acts as if she'd like to go with him," said Steve, quietly.

"Durn her, I'd break her neck as short off as a pipe-stem if she'd offer to think of such a thing. There's Cap'n Hewlet jest gone to his room with a face a heap longer than the ten commandments, and twice as serious!"

"He's green for carin' for the gal if she's fickle-minded," said Napoleon, going in to take the "freedom of the bar" and put his cherished watch away under lock and key.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Rosalette Drummond had seen Hewlet when he went toward the spot where she had hidden the letter, and anxiously she had awaited his return, presuming that he would leave his answer if he had a pencil and paper with him. No sooner did she see him walking along the path that led to the village than she hurried out of the house away toward the place which he had so lately left.

And she was followed by one who had noticed her wild and nervous manner, for her actions were so singular that he feared some sudden frenzy had seized upon her brain. But she, in her haste, having no thought of being followed, did not look behind her. If she had, she would have seen Ethelbert Drummond walking at a rapid pace, yet not so fast as herself, in the same direction.

She was but a few minutes in reaching the desired spot, and quickly found the hasty note which Hewlet had written. Hurrying to the mossy rock so often used by her as a seat, she opened and read the note.

At first, during its perusal, her face flushed up with anger and vexation, but after she had read it, she wept—wept freely and bitterly.

"O my God, why—why must I be so unhappy!" she moaned in a tone of utter anguish.

"What makes you so unhappy, sister?" asked a voice at her side.

Ethelbert had approached while she was sobbing, and she had not heard him.

"Quickly thrusting the crumpled note which she held in her hand, into her bosom—but not unnoticed by him, she rose and said, in a more angry tone than she had ever used before to him or in his presence:

"Ethelbert, are you set as a spy upon my actions, that you have followed me here!"

"A spy, Rosalette! a spy?"

"Yes—a spy. Why did you follow me here?"

"Rosalette, how long is it since you have found my companionship in your walks unwelcome?" he asked, sadly—almost sternly.

She blushed—trembled with agitation, but remained silent.

He sat down by her side and took her hand; he shuddered to find it as cold as ice.

"You are ill, my dear sister, you are ill!" he said.

"No—no, Ethelbert; go home, and leave me awhile, and I will feel better when I return to the house," she said, faintly.

"I cannot leave you, my Rosy, here in this lonely spot, when I know that you are ill; and, sister, whatever may be the trouble which makes you so unhappy, I have the right to share it."

"No, no; if I have troubles, they are but a girl's whims, and not worth thinking of."

"Such bitter tears as you have been shedding were not produced by a trifle, Rosalette. As your brother, I demand to know who or what has annoyed you!"

"Nobody—nothing, nothing," she murmured, not daring to look up into his dark and searching eyes.

"Was the note, which you concealed so confusedly when you heard me speak, written by nobody?"

"Ethelbert, I will not bear to be catechised. I am not a child! Please leave me here to my meditations."

"Rosalette, this is not sisterly."

"Neither is your persistence in opposing my wishes, brotherly."

"Rosalette! this from you; you who have ever been my pet and my darling? Come kiss me, and say that you have been but teasing all this while."

"Ethelbert, do I look as if I were in jest? I do not feel so. I am sorry to hurt your feelings, but I do wish to be alone."

"Be alone, and forever!" he cried, angrily, and he dashed the little hand, which he had been holding, rudely from him. "Within an hour I will leave the Pines to come back no more!"

And he started away; but, ere he had gone ten steps, his heart smote him for his harsh words, and he looked back just in time to see the poor girl sink, with a moan of agony, fainting to the ground.

With a groan of remorse he rushed back to her assistance.

"Dear, dear Rosalette! my sweet sister, forgive me!" he cried, as he raised her tenderly from the earth.

But no reply came from her lips; she was insensible. He was almost frantic with agony.

"My God, I have killed her!" he moaned.

He laid her down carefully on the moss and rushed off to a spring, which bubbled out from among the rocks a few rods distant. Filling his glazed cap with water he hurried back to poor Rosalette, and with the cool liquid bathed her face and head, and with every word of tenderness which thought could bring to his lips, he sought to recall her to life. At last he succeeded; her blue eyes slowly opened, and a sigh came from between her pale lips.

"O Rosy, Rosy, forgive me!" said Ethelbert, his eyes dimmed with tears, which he hardly could restrain.

"Do not be angry with me, Ethelbert: do not be angry with me," she sighed.

"I am not angry, only mad with my own brutal self for speaking so harshly to you," he answered.

"Do not speak of it; let us go back to the house," she said, in a low tone. "I am not well either in heart or body. Do not blame me if I, in anything, have at present withheld my full confidence from you; for no secret entirely my own shall ever be concealed from you. I acknowledge there is a mystery—a mystery which I would give a world to unravel, which dreadfully annoys me; but at present you must not seek to know any more about it from me, or you will, perhaps, retard my discoveries, or even bar me forever from learning what I so desire to know."

"Sister, I will be silent until you bid me speak; quiet, until you bid me act. Now, if you are strong enough, lean on my arm and we will go home."

CHAPTER XXIV.

Seeing that he had got the landlord of the "Golden Anchor" fully aroused in regard to the attentions of the peddler toward Betsy, and that without doubt a storm was brewing which would produce the effects he wished for, he retired to his room, where, lighting a cigar and opening a bottle of wine, he sat down to meditate over his various schemes of infamy.

For an hour or two there he remained in his easy-chair—now and then sipping his wine, and watching the smoke-wreaths as they floated away from his cigar through the flower curtained windows.

A hasty step and the rustle of a dress outside his door aroused him, and he said "Come in!" when a low, tremulous knock told that entrance was desired by one outside.

As he supposed, when he heard the step, it was Betsy—poor Betsy—who came in.

She was trembling with agitation, and her face was flushed. Her eyes were full of tears.

"O Frank, Frank, what shall I do?" she cried, as she threw herself half despairingly into a chair. "Father is dreadfully angry, and I heard him quarreling with the peddler when I came up stairs! Oh, why must I deceive him and pretend to like that man, when I love only you?"

"My dear child—all will soon be over now. He will quarrel with Mr. John Jenkins Smith, and he will leave. But to-night he will be in the outskirts of the village ready to carry you to the place where I will meet you in two days to make you my bride. Only this day wear the mask bravely, my dear girl, and you are mine forever. Here is a note already written, which you must copy with your own hand before you go, and then you fly not from happiness, but to—"

"O Frank, you will not deceive me and fail to come if I go off with that man?"

"No, my pet—no. I love you too well to ever deceive you. Trust in me with your whole heart."

"I do—I will—Frank, Frank, for my heart is all buried up in love for you. But just as you tell me to do, I will do."

"That is a good girl. Take this note and hide it in your bosom until you can copy it. Then bring the original to me. When Smith goes—as he will—pretend to feel very bad about it and very mad at your father from driving him off. Retire to your room early, and when they are all asleep to-night, I myself will walk with you to where Smith will be waiting. Your note must be left on the table in your bedroom. You need not take any clothes with you, for I will purchase better than you have ever worn here."

"It will seem an age, even though it is but few hours before you come to me, Frank."

"The time will soon pass, dearest, cheered by the thought that you will soon be my dear wife. You will be safe under the care of my friend. You have found him to be a perfect gentleman in your intercourse so far—have you not?"

"Yes. He is entirely respectful to me when we are alone, but he makes love rather too strong before folks."

"Not too strong for a mere pretence my child. It is all in accordance with my plan and wishes. After you are gone, I shall rave as loud as your father, I'll warrant you, about your elopement. He'll hear me swear vengeance against the infernal peddler, and see me start off apparently to seek it—but really to hasten to you, my own heart's darling. Now, go—sweet—one kiss and go, for it will not do for me to seem pleased with you. I shall not speak to you at tea-time, but never mind that. We'll make amends when we are alone."

Betsy sighed, kissed him, and went down stairs just in time to meet Mr. John Jenkins Smith, who had been ordered to leave by her father. And now she showed what an actress she could be, by almost going into hysterics at the thought of the sudden departure of the beloved (?) Smith.

Her father overheard her, as she intended, for she purposely made noise enough to reach his ears. And he quickly appeared in the parlor, shouting:

"You, Betsy! Put off to your room and stay there till this peddler chap is off the premises."

"I'll take prison, so I will," sobbed Betsy. "You are breaking my heart, and you know you are."

"I guess putty'll mend it—slide for your room or you'll get somethin' worse than prison," cried Nehemiah, half choked with anger.

"How much is my bill?" said Mr. Smith, in anger. "I'll pay it and leave—but it's only to keep you from abusin' that poor angel gal o' your'n. Don't cry for me, Betsy, but jest remember what we agreed on."

"I will—I will," sobbed Betsy, and she went off to her own room, having played her part as well as if it had been reality.

"Come, my bill—what is it?" asked the ped-

dlar of Hunt, who seemed all at once to be in a study.

"I'd like to know what she and you have agreed on," said he, at last. "I'll give you your bill for nothin' if you'll tell me."

The peddler seemed to hesitate, yet he did not look quite so mad as he did a minute before.

"Come, tell me, and I'll say I'm sorry for talkin' so rough to you, and treat besides," said Nehemiah.

"You won't jaw her no more to-night, will you, if I tell you?" asked Smith.

"No—nor to-morrow neither," cried Hunt.

"And you'll treat all hands in the bar-room, and say you're sorry you insulted me right afore 'em all?"

"Yes—if I must! Now tell me what you and my gal have agreed on."

"Well, we've agreed to love each other till we see some one else that we can like better. That's all!"

And Mr. Smith burst out into a hearty laugh.

"Durn the thing! I didn't know but you 'greed on gettin' married," growled Mr. Hunt, as he turned toward the bar-room, preparatory to "standing treat."

CHAPTER XXV.

It was twilight—that dreamy half-hour or less which is neither day nor night, but a "sprinkling" of both—that dazy, sleepy time before the candles are alight, which a lazy man can enjoy in the summer-time on a cool porch or piazza.

It was twilight, and the senior Drummond was smoking his pipe as he walked to and fro on the pleasant piazza of his cottage, listening to the weird sighing of the wind as it swept through the tops of the long leaved pines.

Ethelbert and Rosalette were in the parlor, close by; for once in a while he could hear their voices in conversation.

And soon he heard the piano touched and the full, thrilling voice of Rosalette in song. Two or three little ballads which she sung, reached his ear, and he paused in his walk and listened; for he loved music such as came from her lips. She paused after a little time, and carelessly seemed to be running her fingers over the piano, playing a wild and singular symphony. Then again her clear voice rung out upon his ear.

Why did he start—start and tremble from head to foot! She was singing the words which Hewlet had bade her sing as a second test. He listened and trembled until the last words had passed her lips. Then he rushed into the room, and, grasping her arm with a wild fierce strength which made her shriek with pain, he shouted:

"Girl! girl, what do you know of Delorme and the Demon of the Wave? Speak—speak before I curse you."

"Father, father—you are crushing my arm," she cried, writhing with pain.

"Tell me where you learned that accursed song?" he cried, releasing her arm. "You did not dream that."

"Father, you terrify our poor Rosy. She did not mean to anger you, I am sure!" said Ethelbert, surprised beyond measure at the sudden and unusual outburst of passion exhibited by his parent.

"Boy, mind your own business! Let her answer my question!" said the old man, sternly.

"I cannot!" gasped poor Rosalette.

"You must—you shall! Some one has been tampering with you—forging lies—lies to destroy my peace! Who is it?" cried Mr. Drummond.

And Ethelbert, who had just lighted a lamp, saw that his father's face was pale as snow, and his eyes glaring as if he had been gazing on some spectre.

Rosalette made no answer. But the tea-coursing down her cheeks, her frame trembling with agitation, told what she was suffering.

"Speak, girl, I am in no humor to be trifled with! This is the second time that I have heard the name of Delorme on your lips. Where did you hear that name?"

"Father, have I no right to utter that name. she asked, and with a sudden and forced calmness, she raised her blue orbs and looked into his black and flashing eyes for a reply.

He quailed before her words and calm lo

"Who told you that—that—"

He stopped—he seemed to think he was asking a question too much. He looked at her an instant, and then, turning, left the room. She and her brother heard him walk out upon the piazza, and there he commenced to pace heavily to and fro.

"Sister, do tell me what this means!" said Ethelbert, in a low and beseeching tone.

"Alas! I know not myself," sighed Rosalette.

"And ye, your son caused him to so."

"I know it, Ethelbert, and he alone knows why. I would give all but life to unravel the mystery."

"Where did you learn the song?"

"I cannot tell you—at least not now, Ethelbert! I hope that I may soon—forgive me—but I cannot now."

"There is some fearful mystery in it! Will you repeat the words to me?"

"Yes!"

And in a tone so low that they could reach his ear, Rosalette repeated the lines which she had sung.

"Strange. There must be something in it," said Ethelbert. "I have seen father before in strange moods, and once I well remember hearing that name, Delorme, burst from his lips when he did not know that I or any one was in hearing!"

"O Ethelbert, if I could but go to England and see if there was a Castle Delorme, or a family of that name there, I would, I feel sure, be happier than I am now. I might then unravel a mystery which now hangs a heavy cloud of dread over me. I fear, I know not what I fear. I dare not, cannot tell you all I do fear. Oh, if I but could!"

"I will go to England, sister, and hunt the kingdom over, and if there be a Castle Delorme, or a family named Delorme, I will know its history, and theirs, before I return to you."

"Brother, if you tell him what you are going for, he will not let you go."

"I will not tell him, Rosy. I will not even say that I think of going to England. He has already said that I might visit France and Italy. I will ask him to let me go there, and I will; but my stay in those lands shall be brief, for I will hasten to learn what you desire."

"Bless you, Ethelbert! I wish I could go with you."

"Perhaps it will be better that you should not, Rosy! I will do better alone if there is any mystery to unravel, for alone I can assume any name or disguise that I choose."

"Perhaps it is best!" said Rosalette. "And now, dear brother, I will retire to my chamber, for father's hasty, heavy step, show that he is angry yet, and I dread his questionings. He may be more calm in the morning."

"Well, Heaven bless you, sweet sister! Good-night!"

"Good-night!"

And as she uttered those words, the pure girl left the room.

She had been gone but a few moments when Mr. Drummond re-entered the room.

"Where is Rosalette?" he asked.

"She has retired to bed! She is not well!" said Ethelbert.

"Have you seen any strangers in her company lately?" continued Mr. Drummond.

"No, father; I have not; nor could she have been in the company of strangers without my knowing it, for you know she never goes abroad except in my company."

"Has she received any letters with foreign post-marks through the office in the village?"

"Not within my knowledge, father. I have got all letters from the office since my return, and none were for her. All were your business letters, with the exception of five or six from some of my college-chums!"

"It is strange—strange—very strange!" muttered Mr. Drummond.

"What is strange, father?" asked Ethelbert.

"Nothing that concerns you, boy!" replied Mr. Drummond, sternly; and he left the room hastily.

Ethelbert heard him go into his sleeping-chamber, which adjoined his own bedroom, to which the young man soon after retired.

And for hours Ethelbert listened to the heavy tread of his father, as he sleeplessly walked to and fro in the solitude of his chamber.

He, too, murmured, "It is strange—very strange!" as he sunk at last into a fretful and uneasy slumber.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Another morning dawned, and another day's sun shone over the little village which rejoiced in the possession of such a model "tarvern" as the "Golden Anchor". And Nehemiah Hunt,

who was the earliest riser in the place, was up with the sun, and had taken his bitters, and mixed a dose for Steve, who was always on hand when "bitters" were on the board.

"Have you got the kitchen-fire agoin', Napoleon?" asked Mr. Hunt, after he had smoked his first pipe.

"Yes—long ago—and peeled the taters and cut the meat for the missis!" replied Steve.

"Has Betsy set the table?" continued Nehemiah.

"No; I guess she's a snoozin' in bed yet!" said Steve. "I haven't seen nor heard nothin' of her yet this mornin'!"

"Maybe she's got the sulks 'cause I sent the durned peddler away!" said Mr. Hunt. "You'd better ring the fust bell."

"It ain't time yet!" said Steve, drawing out his watch, which had already been released from lock and key. "You allus have bre'kfus at seven o'clock, and ring the fust bell ten minutes afore to give folks time to git up and wash. It isn't half-past six yet!"

"I don't care, ring the bell, and it'll rouse her so that she'll be up and set the table. Do that, and then go and milk the cows, and feed the hogs, and water the horses, and clean the stable, and then come and sweep out here."

"Well, give me my bitters, and I'll do it."

"You've had your bitters, haven't you?"

"Only one nip, Nehemiah! You promised me the run o' the bar for a month, last night, you know."

"So I did—go and git your drink," said Nehemiah, with a sigh.

Napoleon drank, and soon after the bell was rung with a vigor which must have killed sleep not only in every room in that house, but for all the neighbors for a hundred yards around.

Some twenty or thirty minutes passed, and Steve came in from "doing up his chores."

"Is that gal up, Napoleon?" asked Mr. Hunt.

"I haven't seen nothin' of her," said Steve.

"The table isn't set at any rate. Maybe she's sick."

"Or took pison! she threatened it last night," cried her father, turning pale. "Run right to my old woman, and tell her to go up to Betsy's room and see what's the matter with her. I darsen't! If she's gone and took pison, I might as well go and hang myself, for they'll say I murdered her."

Steve was almost as much frightened as the landlord, and he hurried away to Mrs. Hunt.

The old lady ran up stairs in a moment when she received the message from her husband.

And in a moment more she came down to her husband, looking so pale and frightened that he felt in a second that what he dreaded had taken place, and half-choked, he gasped out:

"Is she dead?"

"She isn't there, if she is. Her bed isn't tumbled a mite," said Mrs. Hunt, who trembled so that she had to sit down. "She hasn't slept there!"

"O Lord! She has gone and drowneded herself!" groaned Nehemiah.

"Here's a letter with your name onto it, that lay on her table," said Mrs. Hunt.

Nehemiah snatched it from her and began to read it. And as he did so, the pallor left his face, and a red flush of anger came in its place.

"Durn and blast her!" he shouted. "Durn and blast her pacter! I wish she had gone and took pison!"

"O Nehemiah, how can you say so? What is in that letter?" cried his startled wife.

"Durn her! she's gone and run off with that peddler, and is agoin' to marry him," cried Nehemiah, dashing his fist down on the bar furiously. "Oh, if I can only catch 'em, I'll choke 'em both to death. What will Captin' Hewlet say?"

"What is the matter, friend Hunt?" said the captain, just making his appearance, and looking as calm and innocent as if he knew nothing of the elopement.

"Matter that'll set you to swearin'. I s'wore I don't like to tell you, captin', indeed I don't. The old woman may if she wants to."

But the "old woman", as Mr. Hunt called her, could not, for her sobs choked all utterance.

"What is the matter?" asked Hewlet, with a most earnest tone and look. "If you have bad news, out with it—I am a man, and can bear trouble like one."

"Betsy has run off with that mean cuss of a peddler!" groaned Mr. Hunt. "I heard him tell her to remember what they'd agreed on; but the cuss lied to me, and now she's gone, and I s'pose is married afore this time."

"Married? Married? Oh, why did I love her so!" gasped Hewlet. And he proved himself as good an actor as she had done the night before; for, clasping his hand to his forehead, he reeled, and was about to fall full length on the floor, when Steve reached out his arms and caught him.

"Water—water—I'm fainting!" he gasped, as his whole weight rested on Steve.

Mr. Hunt caught up the pitcher of water from the bar, and dashed it full in Hewlet's face, drenching him from head to foot.

"Carry me to my room—this will kill me!" moaned Hewlet, shivering with the unexpected baptism.

Mr. Hunt hurried to help Steve carry Hewlet away; for he really thought the captain was dying.

"Run for the preacher, old woman, he knows somethin' about doctorin'," cried he, as he caught up Hewlet's legs from the floor; for Steve held him under the arms.

"No, no—call no one. Put me in a chair. I will feel better soon," moaned Hewlet. "Oh, the cruel, cruel girl! She knew how I loved her. Never, never will I believe in the truth of woman after this. Never, never!"

"I'll boss-whip 'em both if I ever catch 'em, jist as sure as my name is Nehemiah Hunt," cried the landlord.

"What's did is did, and it can't be helped," said Steve, solemnly. "But I didn't never think that Betsy Hunt would have gone and made a fool of herself."

"O my darter, my poor, poor darter!" sobbed Mrs. Hunt.

"I'll shoot the cursed fellow, even if I find him in a church," cried Hewlet, who had recovered from his fainting-fit very rapidly.

"Shootin' is too good for him," said Mr. Hunt. "He ought to be bit to death with muskeeters, or pecked to death by settin' hens! Only let me get a hold of the pesky gal-thief. He'll wish he wasn't a peddler, I'll bet. Napoleon, mix a hot brandy-sling for the captin'. Don't you see how he shivers?"

"I guess you'd shiver, too, with a hull pitcher of ice-water pitched over you," said Napoleon, as he hurried to mix the "sling."

"I did it 'cause he was a faintin'—I didn't mean no harm," said the landlord, apologetically.

"The shock was too sudden for me—I could not stand it," said Hewlet. "How did you find out she had gone with the peddler?"

"Why, she left a letter in her bedroom, where my old woman found it when she went to look for her, seein' she wasn't around this mornin'. Here it is—she says she's agoin' to marry the peddler, and axes my pardon for it; but durn me into solo-leather if I ever forgive her."

And Mr. Hunt handed Hewlet the letter. The latter took it and read it as coolly and so-berly as if he had never seen it before.

"She has acted very coolly," he said. "It must have been all arranged between them."

"Sartin it was. And I was a blind old fool not to see it," said Mr. Hunt. "If I had only thought such a thing could have happened, I'd have looked her up after I sent him a kitin'. Oh, how cunnin' they was!"

"She doesn't say where they were going to," continued Hewlet, looking over the letter.

"No, not a word," said Mr. Hunt.

"O Betsy, Betsy—I shall never see her again," sobbed Mrs. Hunt.

"I never want to. She has brought shame and disgrace on us in our old age," said her husband, bitterly.

"Maybe he has not yet married her. Just as soon as I feel able to travel, I will trace them out," said Hewlet.

"Oh do, cap'n, do, and a mother will pray to God to bless you and help you to bring her poor, sinful girl back to her arms before she dies," cried Mrs. Hunt, in tones which would have gone to Hewlet's heart, if he had been possessed of any remorseful feeling.

"Here's your hot sling. I know it's good, for I made one jest like it for myself," said Napoleon, at this moment.

Hewlet took it, for he was shivering yet from his shower-bath.

"I'm too fat to travel—I can't ride in no stage-coach that runs, or I'd help you to look after 'em, captin'!" said Mr. Hunt.

"I will do my best, alone!" said Hewlet. "I think I shall be able to go to-morrow. Now, I feel too weak to go. You had better inquire—or rather send some one a few miles to see what route they took!" he added.

"I'll go if the missis can spare me!" said Napoleon.

"Yes, go, Steven—go, but come back soon if you hear anything of 'em, so as to tell the cap'n which way to go!" said Mrs. Hunt.

"Go jest as soon as you're done breakfast!" said Mr. Hunt. "Take my boss!"

"I don't want no breakfast—I'll take another sling and be off!" said Steve.

CHAPTER XXVII.

There were but two at the breakfast-table in the cottage in the Pines the morning after the exciting scene described in the twenty-fifth chapter. They were Mr. Drummond and Ethelbert, and both looked pale and dispirited, as if theirs had been a wakeful and restless night.

"Where is Miss Rosalette?" asked Mr. Drummond of his daughter's maid.

"In bed, sir! She is not well, and told me if you inquired after her to please excuse her from rising to breakfast. She thought she would feel better by and by, for she only has a nervous headache, which rest will alleviate, she says!"

Mr. Drummond made no reply. Ethelbert was the next to break the silence which rested over the gloom of the breakfast-table.

"Father!" said he. "You have several times told me, during my course of college studies, that when I had graduated, I might visit Italy and Greece, and look over the classic grounds which my books had learned me to reverence and love!"

"Yes!" said Mr. Drummond. "I have said so; but you do not want to go now, do you?"

"I should like to, father, while my reading is fresh in my mind!"

"Well, I shall not deny you. Yet I fear almost to have you go from me. A dread of some impending evil seems lately to have come over me, and I cannot shake it off. I am as nervous as an invalid old maid!"

"Why, surely, father—settled as you are for life, with wealth, and none but friends around you—what evil can come to you? Your health, surely, is good!"

"Not so good as it once was! I cannot shake off this nervous feeling!" said Mr. Drummond.

"I am sorry, father. My presence will do you no good. Sister would be a far better nurse than I, if you were ill, which is not the case!"

"Your sister is changed, very much changed of late!" said Mr. Drummond. "I do not know what has occurred—but I can see and feel that she is changed!"

"She does not seem as light-hearted as she used to be!" said Ethelbert. "But if anything is the matter with her, I cannot tell what it is. She has spoken no word, made no sign which would lead me to infer that any evil had befallen her. Your manner to her seems to have made her nervous! You spoke very harshly to her last night, and seized her arm so roughly that she almost fainted!"

"She angered me with a song she sung, and by not answering my questionings!"

"Perhaps she could not answer them, father!"

"She could have told me where she learned the song she sung! There is more in this, my boy, than you know of. I have seen dark days—have been sadly wronged. For such wrong I forsook the country of my birth, and a word which brings back to me the memory of those wrongs, drives me almost to the verge of insanity! Twice now has your sister, in songs sung with apparent carelessness, uttered words and breathed a name which rouse a sleeping devil in my nature. It cannot be a mere accident. She must, when she is well enough to talk calmly, tell me how and where she became acquainted with the words which have so agitated me!"

"Doubtless she will, father. But to leave that subject—you have consented that I should travel! When may I start?"

"If you must go—suit yourself as to time! I will furnish you means to travel in a style befitting your birth and education. You will have to remain in the city some days, to procure a proper outfit of clothing. For a well-dressed traveler will always get along better than a seedy one. Remember, that in the superficial glances of the world's people, dress makes the man. Clothe a philosopher, a poet, or a statesman ever so lofty, in rags, and the very curs will bark at them, and their two-legged masters will imitate the dogs!"

"I suppose it is so, father, though it is but a poor compliment to human nature to have to acknowledge it! Therefore, to please the fastidious eyes of the world which I wish to see, I

will try to make my person look as attractive as possible!"

"Do so, my boy. And now, in turn, do me a favor!"

"Willingly, my father! What can I do to serve you?"

"Do all that you can to learn what is the matter with your sister, and, especially, try to find out where she learned the words she sung last evening—the last song she sung, I mean!"

"Certainly, father, I will strive to do so!"

"And notice, if you can, whether any person, except those of our own household, approach her. There is a mystery somewhere which must be unraveled!"

Ethelbert bowed, but made no reply; for he did not wish to tell his father that he would not act as a spy, as he surely would, had he trusted himself to reply.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Rosalette did not rise until her maid told her that Mr. Drummond had gone down to the village, and it was near noon when this occurred. For she dreaded to meet him after his harsh questionings of the night before. His manner had been so fierce, his voice so stern and harsh, that for the first time in her life she felt fear in his presence. And that very fear began to confirm in her mind the belief already planted there by Hewlet, that Mr. Drummond was not her father.

After she rose she refused the refreshment which her maid wished to bring her, and writing hastily a few lines, she went out, taking them with her, saying to her maid that she thought a walk in the cool air would make her feel better.

Ethelbert had accompanied his father to the village, so she did not fear any observance of her proceedings. She hurried down to the place where she had before placed her letter to Hewlet, and was in the act of placing her note under the stone when she heard a step, and, looking up, saw that Hewlet himself was approaching.

He evidently had not seen her go there, for he paused and seemed about to retire.

"I did not know that you were here, lady, or I should not have intruded!" said he bowing respectfully. "I merely came to leave a note, stating that I was about to leave the village for a few days."

"And I came here with a note to ask an interview with you, Captain Hewlet," said Rosalette, considerably agitated. "I wish to beg you to release me from my secrecy. I believe that my father, as I have ever called Mr. Drummond, will tell me all the secret you keep from me, if I but tell him so much you have already told me. I will not reveal the author of my knowledge—only let me say to him that I have been informed that he is not my father, and that my mother yet lives."

Hewlet, bad as he was, half-pitied the beautiful girl whose pleading tone fell on his ear. He did not reply immediately. When he did, after some thought, he said:

"I hope Miss Rosalette will not deem me cruel in asking for a little time to consider the propriety of acceding to her request. I stated that I was about to be absent from the village for a few days. My absence will be shortened, if Miss Rosalette wishes an interview when I return."

"I do not wish an interview, sir, without it will lead to a knowledge of the mystery which now annoys and appalls me," said Rosalette, quickly.

"My leaving the village is caused by the petition of Mr. and Mrs. Hunt, who are in agony at the elopement of their daughter last night with a jewelry peddler, who has been staying at the tavern some days, and seemed by his presents to have turned her head," continued Hewlet, not appearing to have noticed what Rosalette said.

"Betsy Hunt eloped! Eloped with a stranger!" cried Rosalette, in surprise.

"Yes, she went away in the night, leaving a note stating with whom she fled. Her father quarreled with the peddler yesterday afternoon, and drove him away. It now appears that he and Betsy made their arrangements to elope before he went; and now she is gone, and is most likely his wife before this time. Her parents desire me to try to find her."

"I do not believe that Betsy Hunt has eloped with a stranger, for the purpose of marrying him," said Rosalette, as her eyes seemed to search the very soul-thought of Hewlet in one piercing glance; "for I know

where her heart's love was centred; and a woman's love is not changed in a day or a week—not even years can uproot it."

In spite of his cool assurance, Hewlet could not bear the searching gaze of those truthful eyes.

"You will find her, Captain Hewlet," continued Rosalette. And, oh! she added, in a low and thrilling tone, "as you value the eternity of bliss or of torture which must, one or the other, be yours after death, do not wrong that pure, loving, helpless girl. May God curse you if you do! When you come back, I will expect to hear from you. Until then, I will wait."

Hewlet stood transfixed with astonishment and conscious shame, while she turned away and left the spot. She had read his crime as if aided by a higher power, and he felt as if she could not be deceived. For a moment, remorse troubled his black heart, and he trembled where he stood; but his agitation was only momentary.

"The girl reads me as if I were an open book," he muttered. "If she does not keep her suspicions to herself, she may give me some trouble yet. This will not help my suit with her, that is certain. I wish I had let Betsy alone—the poor little fool isn't worth enough to cause me to risk the loss of the greater prize. But the game is opened, and I must play it out. It is not my way to back out for obstacles, no matter what they are."

And he turned off in the path that led to the village.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Mrs. Hewlet sat in her little room, in the New York boarding-house, looking sadly and anxiously upon her sweet little girl, as she sat playing with her doll, upon the carpet, at her mother's feet.

"Muzzer, what for fazzer dosen't come home? He told Rosy he'd bring her a new dolly when he come!"

Tears hung glittering on the long lashes of the mother's eyes, as she said:

"I hope he will come soon, my dear baby—I hope he will."

"What for you cry, muzzer? Let Rosy kiss your eyes, den dey won't cry," said the little pet, trying to climb up on her mother's lap.

Mrs. Hewlet took her up and kissed her fondly, but she sighed as she did so. Evidently her heart was too heavy for smiles—too sad for sunlight.

The door opened, and the slatternly landlady made her appearance.

"How d' do, Miss Hewlet?" she cried, as she dumped herself down into a chair. "Secin' you didn't come down to breakfast this mornin', I thought I'd jest drop in to see if you wasn't sick or somethin'!"

"I am not very well, Mrs. Larkins, but you need not have troubled yourself, for I am not very ill."

"Don't want a dose o' salts and senna, nor nothin' of that sort, eh?" continued Mrs. Larkins. "I've got 'em in the house. I allers keep 'em; they're good for boarders that's got too big an appetite, if you can only git 'em to take 'em!"

"I do not need any medicine," said Mrs. Hewlet, smiling faintly.

"Haven't heard from your man, lately, have you?"

"No!" and Mrs. Hewlet's lip quivered.

"Mighty strange, isn't it! To think of our readin' of his bein' shipwrecked, in the paper, afore you knew of it. How you fainted and carried on when I told you! I did think you would have died, and I should have been dreadful sorry, for you're the best boarder I've got. You eat so dreadful little, and keep things so nice about you, and you don't turn your nose up if the butter isn't exactly sweet, or the milk kind o' blue with the water the milkman puts in it—for I wouldn't do no such mean thing as to water the milk myself! But your man has writ to you since he got saved from the wrack, hasn't he? I seen the post-man bring you letters, but, as I can't read writin', I didn't know where they was from."

"I have heard from him twice," said the lady, with a sigh, toying the while with the curling hair upon the child's head.

"Isn't he comin' home soon, or doesn't he say? These men don't keer, when they git away from their wimmen, when they come back, as long as they're enjoyin' their own selves! I haven't got no man, though I've had, and buried three, and I'm glad of it, for a peaky man isn't

much use any way: they're good for runnin' of arrands, and bringin' wood and water, but a nigger 'ill do it jest as well, and not grumble, neither! I'm dreadful glad I'm a widder; though if a real good-lookin' man, like that one o' your'n, was to come along and ask me to have him, I should be dreadfully tempted! But, in gin'ral, I don't think hansum men make good husbands: they have so many wimmen' runnin' arter 'em, they can't be good. I reckon your man is—O Lord! there he is, himself!"

And Mrs. Larkins jumped from her chair, as Captain Hewlet entered the room, and, while the weeping wife, joyous now in her tears, was embracing him, and little "Rosy" was receiving her share of his caresses, Mrs. Larkins made her exit, muttering, as she went, the old saying:

"If you talk of the devil, he's sure to pop in!"

"Dear, dear Frank! I am so glad you've come: my heart has almost sunk in this dreadfully dull and lonesome house!" cried the wife, as she gazed fondly on the man who had won her love, and whom she blindly believed to be worthy of it.

"Fuzzer—poor muzzer has been cryin!" said the sweet, little child.

"Why didn't my Rosy kiss her mother, and comfort her?"

"Me did, fuzzer! me did. Has fuzzer brought Rosy a dolly?"

"He will take Rosy out and buy one, pretty soon," said her father.

"You have come now to stay, have you not, dear Frank?" asked the wife, as she held his delicate, gentlemanly hands in hers.

"I wish I had, darling," he said, as he kissed her with apparent tenderness. "But the owner of the vessel I lost is building another vessel for me, and I have to superintend her construction."

"Then why can I not go and live there, near you; at least until she is built?"

"Because it is a cold, bleak place; the people are ignorant and rude, and it is no place for a delicate woman like you, or our sweet child!"

"O Frank! I can bear any privation to be near you. This constant separation from you is killing me; it is fretting my life away!"

"Darling, you must not be so childish. In a few years I shall be able to retire from this life of peril and hardship, and can then take comfort with you and our baby."

"A few years will not find me alive, Frank! I hate to complain, but my heart aches all the time you are gone!"

"Well, dearest, I will try to so build my new vessel, as to have accommodations for you on board, and then you will always be near me."

"Oh, thanks—a thousand thanks, Frank! I feel as though a new lease of life was given me!" cried the wife, smiles shining on her face, and a joyous light gleaming from her yet thankful eyes.

"Rosy all ready, fuzzer; me got on new bonnet muzzer make for me—new shoes, new cloakee!" cried the little girl, making her appearance, dressed to the best of her ability, but, unfortunately, with her bonnet on wrong side in front.

"Mother will fix you and herself, and we'll all take a ride, and then I'll buy you a doll!" said the father, as he took his child up in his arms and kissed it.

"A ride! oh fuzzer—Rosy is so glad!"

And the little thing put her white, chubby arms about his neck, and kissed him with her pure red lips, so fondly, so warmly, so tearfully, that he could not but love her.

What a hellish nature—to speak plainly—a man must have, who, possessing such a wife and child, could, with calm deliberation, plot and accomplish the ruin of a pure, fond, unsophisticated girl like Betsy Hunt, and plot, at the same time, to desert these, and take yet another wife, in the person of Rosalette Drummond. Yet, that such natures do exist, a thousand criminal records attest, and scarce a day passes without revealing even worse pictures—sternly real—than I dare to draw with my pen.

And if, in these pages, I so draw my pictures as to warn the pure and helpless of the evil that is to be found—of the devils, in the shape of men, who go abroad seeking only to betray and to destroy, my aim is accomplished.

CHAPTER XXX.

For the first time in her life, Betsy Hunt found herself in a great city. Traveling, after the first night of the elopement, by railroad, she hardly had time, as they rushed along at what seemed to her to be lightning-speed, and amused, too, by the incessant chat of Mr. John Jenkins Smith, to think of home, or of the rash and imprudent step, which her blind love for, and implicit confidence in, Frank Hewlet had caused her to take. But when she got into the great city of New York, where the rolling and rumbling of millions of cart, carriage, omnibus and car wheels roared like constant thunder in her ears—where, by day, her head ached and her heart sickened, and at night she could not sleep: where, though busy thousands were moving all the time, she felt more lonely than she would have been in a desert or a wilderness—for she knew no one; then she wished, oh, how earnestly! that she never had left her dear, her quiet village home.

Mr. Smith, according to directions from Hewlet, took her to a favorite hotel, which he usually patronized, because it was a kind of headquarters for "fast men", sporting characters, and the like. Betsy was not likely to see any of that class of gentry at first, for her meals were brought to her room, which Smith advised her not to leave until Hewlet arrived.

There, for a long day and two utterly sleepless nights, she remained, weeping and sobbing half her time. If she had known how to go back, or even had been possessed of means to travel with, she would have fled back to her home in spite of her mad love for Hewlet. But, alas! she was penniless and helpless—utterly dependent on his faith and honor.

As if he possessed honor: he, a libertine and a gambler!

How her heart bounded, when, about ten o'clock, on the morning of the second day of her stay there, she heard a quick, strong knock at her door! Her heart told her who it was, even before she opened the door, and found herself clasped in Hewlet's arms, with his kisses of wild and fiery passion burning on her lips.

"O, Frank; dear, dear Frank!" she cried, as soon as she could speak. "I am so glad you have come. I would have died here if you had not. I am crazed with the noise, and the air is so close and stifling that I can scarcely breathe."

"You will soon get so used to it that you will not notice it," he answered.

"It seems as if I never could; but I am so glad you have come. How did you leave father and mother? Did they take on much because I came away?"

"Not half so much as I expected, my dear Betsy. They can get along well enough without you until we can return and astonish them by showing them that you are Mrs. Hewlet, instead of Mrs. John Jenkins Smith."

"I shall be so glad when that day comes, dear Frank. For I do not like the city."

"Poh, my child. You have seen nothing of it yet. We will dine by-and-by, and after dinner I will go after a minister, and we will be married right here, and then this evening I will take you to the theatre."

"Oh, Frank, you are so good, so kind. You make me love you more and more every moment, though it seems as if my love was too strong to increase. There are no words to tell how deeply I love you!"

"Let kisses do it then, my darling. They are Love's best interpreters. When was Smith here?"

"Last evening. He said you would be here surely to-day. I have seen no one else but the chambermaid and the servant who brings my meals."

"Your eyes look red, my sweet Betsy!"

"So would yours, Frank, if you had cried as much as I have. You don't know how lonely and wretched I was; but now that you have come, I am so happy—I can't tell you how happy I am."

"Well, I am glad of it, darling. You will be happier yet, after the minister has spoken the words which will make us one. I will go out now and see the minister, and have him come as soon as our dinner-hour is over."

"Don't stay long, dear Frank! I am so afraid of losing you in this great city."

"No fear, my pet. I will soon be back. Wash the tear-marks from your cheeks while I am gone. In the afternoon, after we are married, I will take you out to some stores where beautiful dresses, all ready made, can be purchased. My wife must dress as well as the best lady in the land!"

"O, Frank, you are too good to me! I am but a poor fond girl, and can never repay you."

"Yes, you can, my beauty, my love. Your kisses are worth more to me than coined gold!" said the libertine, pressing his hot lips to hers. "But, bye-bye, for a little while, my sweet girl. I will soon be back."

And away he went, perfectly jubilant over the success of his plan to get that pure girl into his power.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"Well, your bird is here, engaged, and not a feather ruffled, Frank," cried a well-known voice, as Hewlet descended from the room which Betsy occupied, into the saloon of the hotel.

It was the *ci-devant* peddler, Mr. John Jenkins Smith, who spoke. He now, in his fashionable clothes and superabundance of flashy jewelry, looked to be what he really was—a first-class sporting-man, ready for and equal to any piece of rascality that had money in it.

"Yes, by Jove! You've made out capitally, old fellow!" said Hewlet. "Let's have a bottle of champagne on the strength of it."

"It's too early for champagne; I'd rather have a julep," said the other.

"Well, juleps for two, then," said Frank, beckoning to a waiter and giving him his orders.

"How does the girl look this morning, Frank?"

"Oh, as well as could be expected. She has been crying for me, but now she is as bright as a dollar. By the way, I have a job for you this afternoon."

"Well, name it. I'm on hand for any kind of fun."

"You must play parson and marry us. You can dress in black, put away your jewelry, put pomade noir on your whiskers, don a black wig, and whiten your face with pearl-powder. I will darken our room, and get a few glasses of wine down her throat before the time comes for the ceremony, and she will never penetrate your disguise."

"That's so. But, Frank, you know our bargain. I am to have the girl in three weeks from now."

"Yes; I shall tire of her before that. She is altogether too loving for a fellow to have to stand it all the time. Love can surfeit a fellow as well as honey."

The juleps came, and the villain-friends pledged each other, as they had often done before.

"How did she act when you drove off from the village in the darkness?" asked Hewlet.

"Decidedly scary. She sobbed and cried nearly all the way to the railroad depot. But when I got there, she saw that people would inevitably notice her actions if she kept on making a fuss, she cooled down, and I kept up a lively chat on the cars, and had the satisfaction of seeing her face wreathed in smiles pretty often the rest of the way. She is a beauty, Frank, but terribly green."

"That is her chief charm to me. I'm tired of women that know everything. Ignorance is bliss in this case. But I mustn't stay away from her long. Be on hand, in full parson's toggery, at our room, at precisely two o'clock."

"All right. Shall I find any witnesses?"

"No. I will tell her that it is both unnecessary and unsafe to have any. She'll believe anything and everything that I say. Be on hand at the time. *Au revoir*, till then."

"*Au revoir*!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

Steve had left the sign of the "Golden Anchor" very early in the day, and it was nearly night when he returned with Mr. Hunt's horse, pretty badly used up, and himself in very little better condition.

"Well, what news, Napoleon? Did you track 'em?" cried Mr. Hunt.

"Yes. Give me some bitters to git the dust out o' my throat, and then I'll tell you," said Steve, dismounting, with many groans, and walking up the steps very slowly, and with his legs wide apart, as if he was carrying a blacksmith's anvil between them.

"What is the news, Steven? Have you seen my poor Betsy?" cried Mrs. Hunt, as Steven entered the bar-room.

"No, marm. But I've heard of her. She and the peddler chap have gone off on the Boston Railroad. I couldn't ketch 'em on a hoss. He hired a buggy where he left the railroad to come here, and there he left it when he went back. I don't think he was any peddler, noway."

for they said he was a gentleman, and paid a big price for the buggy, and didn't say nothin' about peddlin' where he got it."

"Here's you bitters, Napoleon," said Mr. Hunt, with a sigh, as he set a bottle and glass before Steve. "Napoleon has tracked them to the railroad that goes to Boston. Cap'n Hewlet," added the landlord, as the last-named person entered the room.

"Very well. I will start in search of them early in the morning," said Hewlet. "And if I catch that peddler I'll have his ears off close to his head."

"I don't care what's done with him, only bring our Betsy back safe," said Mrs. Hunt. "The house is gloomier than a barn without her."

"We'll have to hire help, too," said Nehemiah.

"No; Steven and I can do all the work till she comes back; for I know she will come back just as soon as she gets to tinkin' of her poor old mother, a frettin' and a cryin' herself to death about her here."

"And me a takin' to hard drink to drown grief in," said Nehemiah, pouring out a stiff horn for himself. "Take somethin', Cap'n?"

"No, thank you, Mr. Hunt," replied Hewlet. "I shall make my preparations for starting, and on second thought, I think I will ride over to the railroad to-night, so as to be in time for the morning train."

"Jest so. Don't you want more money than you've got on hand?" said Mr. Hunt. "I've got a little salted down for a rainy day, and you can have some jest as well as not, if you want it."

"No. I have money enough for all expenses. I will do my best to find and bring back your girl; but if I fail, you must not blame me, for in a great city there are thousands of hiding-places, and it will be only by good fortune that I succeed, if I do succeed, in finding them."

"Jest like lookin' for a cambric needle in a barrel o' saw-dust, or a fippenny bit in a haystack," said Nehemiah, with a sigh.

"Why don't you sit down, Stephen? You look as if you was tired 'en a'most to death," said Mrs. Hunt, in a sympathetic tone.

"My sittin' down is ruined for a week, sartin, though I be tired, said Steven, with a groan. "Jettin' over fifty or sixty mile o' road on a hard trottin' hoss, is wuss than goin' to jail. Old Job never had to ride a hard trottin' hoss, I'll bet."

"Take some more bitters, Napoleon, and then go and lay down. I'll do the chores myself to night, said Mr. Hunt, kindly.

"You can't milk. You can't get near enough to the cow to reach under to milk, with all your fat," said Steve.

"That's so. I wish I was lean—lean as you are, Napoleon," said Mr. Hunt, lugubriously.

"You'd be a heap smarter, if you was," said Steven, as he swallowed another glass of bitters, and then went lamely off to do his chores.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The mock-ceremony of marriage between Frank Hewlet and poor Betsy Hunt was over. Half bewildered with wine, and confused, too, by the newness of her situation, the poor girl did not penetrate the disguise of the pretended parson, or even dream that she was a dupe to the deliberate villainy of two scoundrels, who deserved the gallows rather than her smiles.

The "parson" only remained to take a single glass of wine, after he had mumbled over the few words which he declared had made them man and wife, and then they were alone.

"Now I am happy! No more fear—no more distrust," sighed Betsy, too full of joy for anything but a sigh, as she looked up into the dark eyes of him whom she believed to be her husband.

And in those eyes she saw what seemed to her to be the light of joy, of holy happiness, that she was now his wedded wife.

Alas! it was only the baleful fire of triumphant villainy that shone from those eyes.

"Mine, mine dearest, forever!" he whispered, as he bent down and kissed her passionately.

"Yes, forever—forever!" she responded; and she returned his kisses all as fervently as they were given, and now no timid blushes flushed her cheek. What had she, his wedded wife, to blush for, even if he gave her kisses by the million?

"If father and mother could only look in for one minute, how happy they, too, would be!" said Betsy, after a brief interval, during which

their mutual lips were too busy for conversation.

"They will be all the happier when they do see us," said Hewlet. "And now, dearest, get ready to do some shopping. You will have little time enough to prepare for the theatre this evening. This is our bridal-day, and we must make a holiday of it."

"Anything to please you, my husband," said Betsy, as she hastened to put on her bonnet and shawl.

Frank smiled as he saw the old-fashioned straw bonnet on her head, and the crape shawl which had been colored probably a half-dozen times, which she threw over her faultless shoulders.

She saw the smile; and the color came to her face as she said:

"They are the best, and all that I have, dear Frank."

"You will not have to say so an hour hence, my darling," said he. "You shall be as well dressed as any lady in the land."

"O Frank, you will spoil me! I do not wish to be expensive to you. I had rather work and help you to make money, than to spend that which you have laid up."

"Poh! my baby—these little hands of yours were never made for work. You are handsome now; but when you are dressed as you should be, you'll shine with the brightest beauty in the city's gayest circle."

"O Frank, how can you flatter me so?"

"It isn't fashionable for men to tell their wives they're handsome, I know, especially when there are other women to talk to," said Hewlet, laughing. "But really, my pet, you never looked so gloriously beautiful to me as you do now."

"It is because I am so happy, Frank."

And Betsy hid her glowing face on his shoulder for a moment, while he strained her to his breast. Then he kissed her and said:

"Wait a moment here, while I go and order a carriage."

"Why can we not walk? A carriage is expensive, Frank. The man who brought Mr. Smith and me here from the cars, charged two dollars."

"I had rather you would be dressed in fashion before we promenade, my dear," said Hewlet. "Dress in a carriage will not be noticed quite so quickly as it would be on the sidewalk. To-morrow you will be ready for a walk. It will take you a week or two to see half the sights in the city that are worth seeing."

"There is but one sight that I dare to look upon," said Betsy, as Frank went out; "and that is my dear, my noble, handsome husband."

Poor Betsy! Could she have seen him as he was, not as he appeared to be, she would have prayed to be blind forever.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

After the elopement of his daughter, Nehemiah Hunt was still seen, when not otherwise occupied, in the huge arm-chair on the porch of his tavern; but his voice was not now so loud and hilarious as it had been. He did not discuss politics with the same vehemence, nor did his calls for Napoleon come so often, or so loud. He was a changed man. He drank more, and ate less. And if any one asked him if he had heard from Betsy, his cheek would pale, and he would shake his head slowly and mournfully when he said "No."

And his poor wife, though she said little, wept half her time, and grew so pale and thin that it seemed a wonder how she could keep up and about the house.

The sign of the "Golden Anchor" actually seemed to look dim and brassy now, and Steve or "Napoleon" seemed to miss Betsy as much as any one.

When the mail came as it did, twice a week, Nehemiah opened it and called out the supercriptions on the letters and papers; but his voice was toned in a low key, and he did not make comments now as he used to, which would keep his audience on a broad grin until every letter had been delivered or stowed in its proper pigeon-hole. And the customers of Mr. Hunt seemed to feel the chill of the cloud which hung over him and his. They would come in, call quietly for whatever they wanted, liquor or cigars, take them and go away, instead of staying there in squads to chat over the news of the day, and discuss matters and things in general.

After Hewlet had been gone a week or ten days, Mr. Hunt received a letter from him, stating that he had heard from the fugitives, but could not get on their track; but he be-

lieved they had gone either to New Orleans or Havana. Yet he would try to find out where they were, for he, Hewlet, felt deeply for them—the parents.

"Bless his soul! he's a noble chap, Captain Hewlet is," said Nehemiah, as he wiped his eyes after reading the letter aloud to his wife. "He says, while there's life there's hope, and he won't give up the chase as long as there is any chance of findin' our gal."

"Bless the dear man! bless him! But he'll never find Betsy," sighed Mrs. Hunt. "If she only lay in the graveyard over yonder, pure and good as she once was, I'd not feel half so bad as I do. Somehow, I feel jest as if that peddler, or whatever he was, had deceived her, and after carryin' her off, hadn't married her. She was brought up well, and had good principles; but the deceivin' creature may have led her astray. If he hadn't utterly bewitched her, she never would have gone with him in the way she did."

And the poor old lady, as usual, commenced crying, and, with her apron to her eyes, went back to her duties in the kitchen.

"If it's lonesome here, I guess they'll be jest as lonesome up there in the pines," said Steven Tompkins.

"Why?" asked Mr. Hunt, removing his pipe.

"'Cause young Mr. Drummond is agoin' off across the seas to some place they call Europe, to see a tower, or somethin' o' that sort. Or I reckon it's that, for I heard the old gentleman say his son was goin' to take a tower over there, though what a tower is, is more'n I know."

"A goin' to Europe! I wonder what good he'll find there among kings and dukes, and other tyrants, sich as our forefathers had to run from," said Mr. Hunt.

"I don't know," said Napoleon. "But I guess they can't make no better whisky there than we've got."

"When is the young gentleman goin'?" asked Nehemiah.

"To-morrow mornin', I guess. He's all packed up to go. I heard him tell Cap'n Hadley to use the 'Mercury' and his other boats jest the same as if they were his own. And he told Cy Sears to ride his favorite hoss as much as he liked, for he'd like to have him exercised; and he know'd Cyrus was a good hand in the saddle, or in a boat either, as far as that went."

"Well—well, let him go. It's not likely he'll see our Betsy in Europe. Get some eggs, Napoleon. I feel kind o' holler in the stomach, and I think a nogg will do me good."

"I shouldn't wonder if it did," said Steve, as he started off. "Noggs make good stuffin', at any rate."

"How is your good wife, Mr. Hunt?" asked Mr. Noble, the worthy village pastor, stopping as he was passing along.

"Poorly, Mr. Noble, poorly! She frets dreadfully about our poor, sinful child. How does poor Kate Alden wear? I seen you comin' out of her house jest now."

"She grieves greatly over her loss, but she is quiet and as patient in her grief as could be expected. We all have troubles and trials, friend Hunt, often sent to soften our hearts, and make us turn to Him who alone can alleviate earthly grief. Some, it is true, suffer, or seem to suffer, more than others; but it is not just to complain of Him who sees not as man sees, but it is better to bow our heads meekly to His will. Darkness is not for all time—light is beyond, and will surely dispel it in good time. Ask Mrs. Hunt to come over and see my wife when she has time. It will cheer her up, perhaps."

"Thankes, Mr. Noble, thankes—I will. You're very kind, sir, very kind."

The minister walked on, and Nehemiah went into his bar-room, for Steve had come back with eggs for the "noggs."

"Napoleon," said Mr. Hunt, "I want you, to-night, when folks have all gone to bed, to take a ham, and a cheese, and a keg o' that new buckwheat flour, and wheel 'em over to Parson Noble's house, and take 'em and put 'em on the front door step. Don't let nobody see you, and don't tell nobody of it."

"Why, Nehemiah, you don't belong to church, and don't never go to meetin'?" said Steve, in astonishment.

"No matter for that," said Nehemiah, as he took down two large tumblers, and went to making a couple of noggs. "He is good to the poor, and the sick, and them that's in distress. And he has hard work to get along, with his sickly wife and sich a large family of children, on the little that his church-folks pay him."

The ham and cheese'll eat just as good if a sinner and a publican gives it with a free will as if it come from a Christian, that made a show before folks of givin' it. He won't know but what some better man than me sent it there."

"Cur'ous—cur'ous! You give away a heap in the course of a year, Nehemiah, and nobody ever knows of it," said Steve, thoughtfully. "Why, I've heard people say you was stingy, 'cause you didn't never go to the donation parties, nor put nothin' in mish'ary-boxes, nor sish. I've told 'em they didn't know you like I did; but I couldn't tell 'em what you've did, 'cause it's agin your orders."

"Before folks I pay my debts, and do as I'd like others to do to me," said Nehemiah. "That's all the outside religion I've got. I try to be fair and honest, and make my livin' in that way. If I can help a widder, or an orphan, or a poor preacher, without makin' a show of it, to shame the poor creeturs that I want to help, that's my business, and that's what I call my inside religion."

And Nehemiah, having finished mixing the egg-noggs, pushed one over to Napoleon, and took the other himself.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Ethelbert Drummond had bidden his father and sister farewell, and had left the cottage in the pines for his European tour—or *tour*, as Steve Tompkins called it. Mr. Drummond had evinced considerable feeling when he shook hands with his son, as he stepped into the carriage which was to take him to the railroad, en route for the city—more even than Rosalette, who was even cheerful as she bade him good-bye, and asked him to write often. Tears glittered in the old man's eyes as he turned back into the cottage; for he dearly loved his son, and felt that he would be lonesome in his absence—the more lonesome, because latterly Rosalette had seemed rather to avoid him than to seek his company, and had not evinced that warm daughterly love and confidence which from her childhood she had so freely and so gushingly given to him.

True, he felt himself somewhat to blame for this, and he feared and felt that there was something more than mere accident in her singing the words which on two occasions had so agitated him.

"Rosalette, my child, come here and sit by me," said he, in a voice broken and quivering with emotion, after Ethelbert had gone. "I shall feel very, very lonely without my boy now, and if you remain as cold and distant as you have for a few days past, I shall be very unhappy."

"I do not mean to be cold or distant, dear father," said Rosalette, as she took a seat near him. "I am sorry that Ethelbert has left us; yet travel will improve his mind, and it would be selfish in us to wish him to remain when he so earnestly wished to go abroad."

"Do you not remember, child, how you were startled at the thought of his ever leaving us, when I spoke of it, immediately after his return from college?"

"Yes, dear father; and I also remember that then you rebuked me for my selfishness. You said that you had educated him to play a man's part in the world."

"So I have—so I have, and it is childish and weak in me to feel bad when I send him out to see what the world is made of. You, too, would like to travel—would you not, my girl? I think I have heard you say so."

"Not without it were in your company and that of Ethelbert, father. I am quite content to remain here, and do all I can to make you comfortable and happy, and to do my traveling in the perusal of Ethelbert's accounts of his journeys."

"You are a good child, Rosy—a good child! I may have spoken harshly to you sometimes, but I did not mean it; it did not come from my heart. When I look away back to the wrongs and the griefs which drove me from my native land to this country, I forget myself and all my surroundings, and I almost go mad."

"You must have suffered greatly to remember it so long, my father."

"Ah, my child, you never will know how much!"

"Dear father, I cannot mend the past, but I can and will do all that I can to make your present pleasant. I will strive all I can to make your heart light. I will ride with you, walk with you, read to you."

"Why did you not also say you would sing to me?"

"Because, father, I have angered you with my songs, and I do not wish to do so again!"

"I was wrong, child; but you mentioned a name that brought recollections of misery back to me. And you refused to tell me—but there, I will not pain you, child. We will never speak of it again. I will talk of something else."

"Has Mr Hunt heard from his daughter yet?" asked Rosalette, but too glad to change the subject.

"No, I believe not," replied Mr. Drummond. "Hewlet has gone to try to look her up for them; but I am told that he writes that he cannot find her."

"I do not believe it. Wherever Frank Hewlet is, there poor Betsy Hunt will be found," said Rosalette, quite positively. "If he could have been followed, without his being aware that he was watched, I am sure her whereabouts would have been discovered."

"You astonish me, Rosy. She ran off with another man."

"It is true, father; but I believe that some specious tale, invented by Hewlet to shield himself from suspicion, caused her to do it; that the peddler with whom she is said to have eloped, was some tool of Hewlet's in disguise; and that he was employed by Hewlet to carry her off, so that Hewlet could meet her when he pretended to go in search of her."

"What makes you think, my child, that Hewlet could be such a villain?"

"He looks it, father. The Creator has stamped the word 'libertine' on that man's features—marked it in his passionate, treacherous eye. And I know how Betsy Hunt loved him. You know, that next to ourselves, she was first at the Bluff when his life was in peril; you can remember how she lay almost dead until he was rescued; how she hovered here about our house until he was out of all danger!"

"That is so," said Mr. Drummond, thoughtfully.

"And do you think, father, that such love could be changed in a week or two, and that she could turn from the man whom she had literally worshiped—turn to love another, and be a stranger, and to disgrace herself and break her parents' hearts by running away with him?"

"No, I do not. It is contrary to the nature of woman to be so fickle and false," said Mr. Drummond.

"And do you not think, with the utter abandonment of self with which she loved Hewlet, that she would obey him in any plan which he might form to withdraw her from the eyes of her parents, which would watch over her purity?"

"It looks to me as if she would," said Mr. Drummond. "But I never thought that Hewlet was capable of any such villainy."

"Ah, father, you read men with a careless eye. We women scan character in the opposite sex more closely than men. You judge them by their business-habits and qualifications. We look at their manners, their looks, their accomplishments; and while we listen to their words, often doubt the tongue, but study the eye, which will speak truth when speech is but a mask for falsehood."

"Why, Rosy, I never dreamed that you had half so much thought about or knowledge of character before."

"Father, I have thought much and studied in my own way a great deal. It is true that my experience has not been great, but I have improved all that I had. Betsy Hunt told me, long since, that she loved Hewlet, and in very consequence I have watched and studied his character as closely as I could with the small opportunity that I have had. It is possible that I may misjudge the man; but I think not, and that time will prove my surmises to be correct. I fear that poor Betsy Hunt is his dupe and his victim."

"He deserves hanging if it is so!" said Mr. Drummond, indignantly. "She is the only child of as honest a man as there is in the village, and a harder-working woman cannot be found than her poor mother. I think Mr. Hunt ought to know what you think, Rosy."

"I wish that he did, father; and yet I doubt whether it would be prudent at this moment to let him know it. Hewlet has evidently so won upon his confidence that it would be hard to shake it, and if anything was said to him about Hewlet, most likely he would communicate it to him at once. And, then, Hewlet on his guard, would take means to prevent any discovery, if

search should be made for Betsy, where he was or had been!"

"That is so, child. You speak with a forethought that even I, with my years, do not possess!"

"There is one way that I think, if followed, would lead to the discovery of the poor girl! Some man of coolness and sagacity, who knows Hewlet, and Betsy also, might, if well disguised, get on his track in the places which he visits in the city, and thus, unknown to him, trace her out!"

"Yes; that might be done. Who is there in the village who could and would do it? It would not be an easy task for me."

"Nor for a world would I have you undertake it, father!" said Rosalette, hastily. "While Ethelbert is gone, you must not leave me! I would not stay under this roof a night without your protection!"

"Why, child; who would dare to harm you?" cried Mr. Drummond, in surprise.

"Men of base natures dare anything and everything to accomplish evil desires!" replied Rosalette. "If you will promise me not to say a word to a living person, about a matter which I will reveal to you, until you have my consent to do so, I will tell you why I will not remain where you cannot protect me."

"I promise you, child—though I dislike to be bound by promises. What is it that seems to terrify you?"

"Father, I am not exactly terrified, but, thinking the man to be all that I have told you, I fear Captain Hewlet. Not only once—but three times has he dared to insult me with his protestations of love! I cannot tell you now—perhaps some day I can. I have haughtily, bitterly repulsed him; but repulse will not conquer love, and it is apt to beget hate, if it does."

"The villain! I will annihilate him! I will crush him, as I would a viper, beneath my heel!" cried Mr. Drummond, almost choked with anger. "If he ever ventures into my presence again, I will read him a lesson that he will remember up to his dying day."

"You forget, father, that you promised not to speak to a living person of this matter, without my consent. So far, he has done me no harm. If he persists, I will inform you, and release you also from your promise, and you may use what means you choose to release me from the annoyance."

"Well—well! I'll horsewhip the scoundrel till he can't stand! I'll do it the moment you release me from my promise!"

"It is nearly dinner-time, father—I must dress."

"So it is, child. Bless me! how time has run on this morning!" said the old gentleman as he looked at his watch.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Another day dawned upon poor Betsy Hunt—yet Betsy Hunt, although she believed herself to be truly and legally Mrs. Frank Hewlet. Dressed in one of those neat and pretty morning dresses, so becoming to the fairer and better portion of humanity, she sat half ponting, half smiling, in their room, while both herself and a hot breakfast were waiting for the appearance of Mr. Hewlet, who, having imbibed considerably the day and night before, had found it necessary to go down into the saloon to procure a cock-tail to set his "head right".

He was not long absent, and returned with a smiling face, as if the liquid "smile" which he had taken had done him good.

"Well, dearest, now that you have had time to think, how did you like the play last night? You wept over the finale, as if it had been a reality."

"How could I do otherwise—or anybody else, dear Frank? Poor 'Mrs. Haller,' how I pitied her there, with that stern 'Stranger,' her husband, looking so cold and cruel at her, when she was on her knees, pleading for his forgiveness and for her children."

"Here was a grave fault, Betsy!"

"Yes, Frank; but she erred only once and was so sorry for it, and tried always afterward to be so good. An angel could not have done more. I could not but pity her."

"So your tears attested." Yet it was only a play. You wept over the drama, but you laughed quite as heartily over the farce."

"How could I help that? That queer fellow going about with an umbrella under his arm, and poking his nose into everybody's business, all the time excusing himself by saying, 'I hope I don't intrude!' He put me so much in mind

of Johnny Haight, at home—Peaked—~~was~~ Haight, as they call him in the village. He is a natural Paul Pry, and could beat the one in the theatre all hollow, in his inquisitiveness.

"Well, you enjoyed yourself, did you not, pet?"

"Yes—because you were there by my side!" replied the young wife. "The music was grand. But when they were not acting, it seemed to me as if all the people in the house were looking right at us."

"That was because you looked so handsome, my dear!"

"O Frank, how can you say so? I am sure there were a great many handsomer women there than I am."

"They were handsome only with paint and pearl-powder, my girl. False hair and false teeth, padded busts and painted faces often make up one of our city beauties. It is only from the fresh, healthy air of the country that we get real flesh-and-blood beauty."

"Well, I scarcely wonder. The close, hot air, and the dust and the noise of the city, must soon wear a woman out. You do not know how I long, already, for a breath of fresh air."

"Well, we will take a ride over on Long Island to-day. There is a race coming off on the course that I want to see. You will get fresh air, and see new faces there. How did you like the dance between the acts last night?"

"I did not like it at all. The girl dressed so immodestly that I only looked once, and then turned my head away. Why, she was hardly dressed at all. I cannot see how a modest woman could look at her without feeling ashamed for her."

"My sweet little innocent, you'll get over all this, by-and-by. Why, if I were to die, you might, with your beauty, be tempted to go on the stage, and you'd make your fortune if you did!"

"I'd die first!" said Betsy, positively.

"Yet that poor girl, whom you condemn so for exposing her person, has to do it to live—she might starve if she did not dance—and if she did not dress as she does, no one would give a cent to see her dance. Did you not see that she received twice as much applause as any other actress?"

"Yes, and I thought the people were fools for it. For my part, I cannot remember how the dance looked at all, only that she was half naked; but the great, black, tearful eyes of 'Mrs. Haller', her mournful, imploring face, will rest in my memory forever. The thrilling tone of her sweet voice yet ring in my ears! Oh, if I could act like her, I think I should not fear to be an actress; for she must be good, who can act so well!"

"You are thinking so much of the play that you are forgetting your breakfast, my love!" said Hewlet, as he helped her to an omelet.

"I am thinking more of you than either, dear Frank. Oh, if we were only back in our own little village, how happy I would be with you!"

"It is a dull place, Betsy. No theatres—no races—no billiards—no beautiful stores to go shopping to."

"I know it, Frank. But the fresh air, the sweet flowers, the honest, chatty people, with out paint or deception—are they not better?"

"We'll see what you think, two or three weeks later, my dear. You have not been to the opera yet, or to a ball, or witnessed a race or regatta. Why, what is the matter with you, dear—you are putting salt, instead of sugar, in your coffee!"

"Am I? Well, Frank, it is no wonder. The continual noise here almost crazes me. It seems as if I never could get used to it."

"In a month, child, you will not notice it."

"Then, in a month, I shall be as deaf as a stone; so deaf that I can't hear thunder?"

"We'll see. I must purchase an opera-glass for you, to-day."

"What, one of those double-barreled things that people looked at us through last night, which I asked you about?"

"Yes, dear. They are fashionable. Everybody carries them in the opera. You can see so plainly with them, that you can count a lady's eyelashes across the theatre; see the gold filling in her teeth, if she laughs; or notice if she blushes inside of the paint on her cheeks."

"Well, I am sure I don't want one, Frank. My eyes are good enough for all useful purposes."

"Yet, my pet, it will not do for you to be out of the fashion. You must do here as others do."

"Not if they do wrong, Frank. You surely do not want me to paint, or to wear false hair?"

"No, love, certainly not at present; for your natural color is ahead of liquid rouge, and your complexion of snow-white cream. Your hair cannot be improved. Your teeth are perfect, and your figure is as the *modiste* who fitted your dresses last night declared, so near perfection, that a sculptor might sigh to have you for a model."

"Now, stop, Frank, or I'll put salt in your coffee! I never did like flattery, you know?"

"Truth is not flattery, my darling! But finish your breakfast, love. I must go and get a nice turn-out to visit the races in."

"A turn out! What is that, Frank?"

"Why, a nice carriage, you dear little simpleton. I will be back soon. By-by!"

And kissing her gayly, Hewlet went out.

"I believe I am a simpleton; but, oh! how I love him!" said the poor girl, thoughtfully, after he had gone.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"Letters from Ethelbert, father—letters from Ethelbert!" cried Rosalette Drummond, one morning, not more than three or four weeks after his departure.

"So soon? I believe they'll have balloon-packets instead of steam before long," replied Mr. Drummond, as he took a letter which she handed him. And while he took out his spectacles to assist his eyes in reading, she sat down to regain her breath, for she had become almost breathless in hurrying from the village post-office.

"I could not wait, but read my letter at the office," she said. "He has crossed the ocean in safety, and the vessel made the quickest passage on record. Fortune smiles on the commencement of his journey."

"Yes; but he took the English steamer instead of the Havre packet."

"So he says in his letter to me, father. He would have been delayed ten or twelve days in the city waiting for the Havre ship; and, you see, he was almost in France at the time that the last-named vessel would have sailed. It is but a few hours trip across the Channel from England to France."

"True. Ethelbert wishes to keep moving. Though leisurely traveling is best for pleasure. He writes in high spirits."

"Yes. It makes me cheerful to read his letter. What joy it will be, when he comes back to sit in the long winter evenings, and hear him describe all that he has seen! How much better than book-traveling! We know that he will tell the truth, and that is a thing book-makers are said to be sadly deficient in uttering."

"Did you make the calls that I suggested, while you were down in the village?"

"Yes, father. I went early, so as to have an hour or two to spare before the mail came in. I first went to see poor Kate Alden. O father, it made my heart bleed to see her! No one need ever tell me that there is not true love in low life. She is slowly grieving herself to death for her dead husband. She who was the rosiest, most gleesome woman in all the village, is now quiet, pale, and as still as if she had been turned to marble. Even her poor little baby seems to be pining away, like herself. I tried to utter words of comfort, and she thanked me very gently; and while a few tears slowly rolled down her frozen cheeks, she said the Comforter was coming. I knew that she meant death by that. I took the little baby in my arms and kissed it, and it seemed pleased with my caresses, and played with the ribbons of my bonnet. But my heart was so full of pity for the poor widowed woman, that I could not stay there without crying; and so I came away soon. She sent her thanks for your kindness, and said that everybody was so kind she felt no need for anything in the world."

"Poor woman! I am sorry that she takes her loss so to heart. All the tears in the world cannot recall her husband to her side. Did you go to the Hunts, Rosalette?"

"Yes, father. And she, too, is grieving her life away. But she mourns and frets in a different way from Kate Alden. She talks of Betsy, and nothing else but Betsy! I believe that she will become insane. She says she dreams of her child every night, and that sometimes she sees her in heaven, sometimes in the other place. She says she knows she is dead, and she is afraid that she has been buried with the city-paupers in the Potter's Field that she has heard of."

"Did you hint about your suspicions of Hewlet?"

"No, father. I saw that it would be useless. I casually mentioned his name, and the old lady burst out in panegyrics about him. She said he was a living angel. It Betsy had only married him, as he wanted her to, all would have been well, and she would not have been a shame and disgrace to them. I came away as soon as I could, for the poor old woman almost crazed me with her childish ravings. But poor Kate Alden!—my heart bleeds for her!"

And Kate rose with a sigh, and went to her room to lay aside her bonnet and shawl.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

What a pity it is that the "honeymoons" of young married people do not last a life-time! Poor Betsy Hunt, who believed herself really and truly married to Frank Hewlet, saw, with indescribable pain, that even in two weeks after their marriage the ardor and affection of Frank began to exhibit a change. For the first ten or twelve days, he was constantly near her—seemed ever to be studying some new plan to give her pleasure, thinking ever of some new means to add to her enjoyment. And, oh! how gratefully affectionate she was! But after that, Frank began to grow cold and careless. He left her early in the day, and did not come back until late in the night. And when she tearfully asked him what kept him away so much, his voice was not so gentle as it used to be, when he told her that he had been busy with friends.

"They cannot be good friends to keep you away so late from your poor little wife!" she would murmur. And then she would weep, and sob herself to sleep, like a tired babe, upon his breast.

At first, he tried to excuse himself, and comfort her; then he began to exhibit petulance, and say it was not exactly the thing for a man to be tied to a woman's apron-strings. Poor Betsy saw that he was growing colder, colder every day, and, oh! how her heart ached!

When they were first married, Mr. John Jenkins Smith—now known to her by his real name, Barnard—very seldom called to see them; but now he came almost every day—often when Hewlet was absent; and then he made excuses that he wanted to see him on important business, and must await his return. During these stays, he was very chatty, and tried his best to make himself agreeable to Betsy, but she, though treating him as her husband's friend, with politeness, was exceedingly cold and reserved in her civility. Indeed, she more than once hinted to him that she did not like his company in the absence of her husband; but he was very slow to take hints.

On one occasion, he intimated that her husband was more attentive to other ladies than to herself, and that such were the "friends" who kept him away from her; but in so doing, he brought a bitter and indignant rebuke from her lips, and only injured himself in her eyes. It is a poor game to try, that of lessening a husband in the eyes of a fond wife. And so he found it. She told her husband of it when he came back; but Frank only laughed, and said Barnard was an odd fellow!

When Hewlet did spend an evening at home now, he had Barnard and three or four other flashily-dressed companions generally there, to play cards and drink wine with him; and when his companions, flushed with wine, addressed Betsy in terms which brought blushes to her cheek, he only laughed, and took no manner of offence at that which both shocked and pained her. It was evident—alas! too evident—to poor Betsy, that he was already getting tired of her charms.

In truth, the time was almost up which had been set for her transfer to Barnard, in payment for his assistance in her abduction from her village-home; and now all that Hewlet cared for was the easiest way of getting her off his hands.

The task was not difficult to such an accomplished and heartless villain as he was. His plan once laid, was quickly followed up. One night she had sat up until long after midnight, watching and waiting, with an aching heart, for his return. The clock on a neighboring church-steeple had just struck two, and while its heavy, knell-like echoes yet reverberated on her ear, he staggered into the room evidently in a state of terrible excitement. There was what seemed to her to be a terrible wound on his face; for it was covered with blood, and his hands, too, were bloody.

"O Frank! Frank!" she screamed, "what is the matter? Has some one been trying to murder you?"

"Hush—hush!" he said, in a hoarse whisper. "Make no noise; I expect the police on my track every moment. I have had a fight, and have killed a man. I must fly!"

"Yes—yes; and I will go with you!" gasped the terror-stricken woman.

"No; it will be all that I can do to escape alone. You will be watched by those who try to find out where I am. If I am caught, I will be hung. Barnard will see to you, and tell you where I am as soon as I can let him know. There! good-bye! Don't fret about me! I must go, or the police will have me!"

And he fled away, leaving her senseless upon the floor; for she felt as if stricken dead when he spoke those terrible words, "good-bye!"

When she came to herself, the sunlight was streaming in through her window. She rose, and thought that she had dreamed a terrible dream; but when she looked at her ghastly, haggard face in the mirror, she saw blood upon it—his blood, as she thought, left there when he pressed his last kiss upon her lips, 'ere he fled away, she knew not whither.

She did not know that a little red paint, well applied, had made her think that he was dreadfully wounded—her terror had blinded her entirely to his trickery.

And now, though she did not know it, she was deliberately deserted by her betrayer.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

With a heart so sunk in utter wretchedness that she knew not what to do, poor Betsy paced the floor of her room for two or three hours. She trembled at every step she heard, even though servants only were passing her door; for most of the boarders at that hotel were, as I have said before, "sporting men", who, spending the night in their nefarious business, seldom rose much before noon.

She did not, as usual, ring her bell, to have breakfast brought; for she had no thought of food or hunger now. And when, at last—probably at nine or ten o'clock—a step halted at her door, and she heard a knock for admittance, she trembled so that she could hardly unlock the door; for she felt sure that the officers of justice had come to seek her husband.

But it was Barnard who came.

"Have you seen my husband?" she gasped, as she sunk into a chair, after he had entered and closed the door.

"No; but I have heard from him!" he said. "He is in a bad scrape. He wrote me a hasty note before he went away, and sent it by a trusty friend. Here it is. He says I must take you away from the hotel to private apartments, where you can be as quiet as possible until it is safe to send for you to join him!"

Betsy took the note, and read it. It directed Barnard to do as he had said.

"Oh, I had rather go home—home to my parents!" she cried. "I will go—but I have no money. He did not think to leave me any. Poor Frank! he was dreadfully hurt; but he did not even wait for me to bind up his wounds! Oh! what shall I do?"

"As your husband's friend, and your friend, dear lady, let me advise you to do as he says—go to private apartments, which I hired as soon as I read this note. I have paid your bill at the hotel here, and the sooner you leave it, before your husband's trouble gets noised abroad, the better it will be for you! At least, that is the best advice that I can offer!" said Barnard, in the most sincere tone.

"It seems to me if he had only had time to think, or had known how wretchedly lonesome I must be without him, he would have consented to my going home!" said Betsy.

"Perhaps he will yet, after he hears of your desire. But, at present, this hotel is no place for you!" replied Barnard.

"That is so. If you will leave me for a little while, I will change my dress, and pack up my trunks."

"I will do so, Mrs. Hewlet. I will be absent half an hour. Is that long enough?"

"Yes; I will be ready in that time. Oh! Heaven help me in this hour of trouble. I am already getting my reward for leaving my good, kind parents!"

And poor Betsy locked her door after Barnard went out, and, with many a sob and tear, made her preparations to leave the apartments in which she had known so much brief happiness, and had now met the first of the blighting storm of wretchedness.

An hour later, she was seated in a close carriage, with Barnard by her side, and driven she knew not where. She only knew that it was a

long way; for the carriage seemed to go very fast, and she was in it an hour or more before it stopped. When Barnard helped her out, she saw that they were in front of a large, dingy-looking brick-house; but she had no time to make any observations of the locality, for Barnard hurried her into the house, saying that he was afraid the police would watch or follow them, on account of her husband.

In a few seconds, she found herself in a large, handsomely-furnished parlor, with a bedroom adjoining, as she could see by its furniture through the open door. There were but two windows to the parlor, and through them she could only see a small back-yard, with about six feet square of grass in its centre, and back of that the windowless dead wall of some huge building.

Her trunks were brought in by the coach-driver, who, being paid by Barnard, went out and left them alone there. Then, after removing her bonnet and shawl, poor Betsy had time to look around. Barnard having learned that she had not breakfasted, had gone somewhere in the house to order refreshments for her; and she was glad of it when her eyes rested on a couple of pictures which hung in the room.

They were so glaringly immodest that she hurried to take them down and hide them before he could return. She had just concealed them in a closet which she found inside the bedroom when he returned. She watched him to see if he noticed what she had done; but as he did not appear to, she thought that he had not noticed the pictures before, and felt better because they were removed. For she was too pure in heart yet to dream how much of a villain he was.

He did not remain long, but said that he would go and see what he could learn about her husband's difficulty, and would return in the evening to let her know what news he had gathered. The lady who kept the house would attend to all her wants, he said; but he advised her by no means to venture out into the street, for an unprotected woman in that great city was in constant peril in the street.

And she, believing him, told him she had no desire to move out of her room, unless it was to go home, or to rejoin her poor husband.

Barnard had not been gone long before a woman entered with a large tray, upon which were the materials for a substantial breakfast. Eggs, meats, toast, coffee, milk, etc., were placed before her, but poor Betsy felt no appetite for food.

The woman who brought the tray was a fat, squabby, greasy, and most repulsive-looking creature—rather beyond the middle age. Her gray eyes had a cast, looking at each other as if one wanted to see what the other was doing all the time. Her complexion was of a rich brandy color, and her nose of the "barnacle" order. Upon her fat, dirty hands she wore a profusion of valuable rings. Her squat figure was robed in a dirty silk dress; and her uncombed hair hung in frizzly curls over her bare shoulders, for her dress had been made in the "low-necked" fashion.

She soon, by her conversation, made Betsy know that she was landlady of the house.

"Why, what has become of my 'Venus and Adonis', and 'Susannah and the Elders'?" she asked, as she looked up at the space where the pictures had been.

"Do you mean the pictures which hung from the ceiling?" asked Betsy, innocently.

"Yes, to be sure!" replied the landlady.

"I took them down, and put them out of sight in the closet when Mr. Barnard went to order breakfast," said Betsy. "I didn't think they were such pictures as ought to be seen in a lady's room, where gentlemen visited, at any rate. I could not look at them alone without blushing."

The landlady looked at her a moment to see if she was serious, and then she burst into a laugh that made the room ring.

"Barnard ought to have you on exhibition!" at last she cried. "Why, such pictures are all the style on the Fifth avenue. They make you blush? Well, I wish I may have to drink Croton water all my life if you don't beat any girl that I ever saw! I shall laugh myself to death!"

And the woman rose and went out of the room laughing, much relieving poor Betsy by her departure.

CHAPTER XL.

Rosalette, thinking that Hewlet was far away, and feeling lonesome, too, during Ethelbert's absence, frequently visited her favorite retreat by the sea-side, not dreaming of any intrusion there. She went there one morning soon after she had received her first foreign letter from Ethelbert, and sitting upon her moss-covered rock, gazed out upon the placid ocean, and completely lost herself in thought—thought which wandered away across that vast sea, and off into lands and realms she might never see.

She was aroused from her dreamy reverie by the sound of approaching footsteps, and sprang to her feet in time to confront Captain Hewlet, who stood before her with a note in his hand.

"Pardon me, fair lady," said he, with a low bow. "I did not know that you were here, therefore my intrusion is not intentional. I came simply to deposit a note in the old place to state that I had returned, and should Miss Drummond desire an interview, I should only be too happy to accord it."

"Captain Hewlet might have saved himself the trouble. I have no desire for any interviews with him," said Rosalette, laughingly.

"Col-las marble, and more cruel than death!" said Hewlet, bitterly. "When I went away, Miss Drummond was very anxious to know a certain secret in my possession, I think?"

"That anxiety no longer exists," said Rosalette, quietly. "If there was any truth in the matter you pretended to know, I have taken means to find it out."

"So, ho! That is the cause of Ethelbert Drummond's visit to Europe—is it?" said he; and his face flushed with anger. "Without my help he will have his labor for his pains. And you, fair and honorable lady, who so solemnly promised not to tell him or your father one word of what I told you, how can you excuse yourself for your perjury?" he added, with a sneer.

"I have not broken my promise, Captain Hewlet. You will now oblige me by moving out of my path; I wish to return home."

"Not so fast, fair and haughty lady! This interview is not concluded yet, nor will it be until it is my pleasure that you should pass me. You seem determined to so act that my wooing shall be rude and forcible. For avoid me as you may—hate me as you will, you are destined to be my wife!"

"Man, you are beside yourself! Sooner than wed you, I would cast myself into yonder ocean, which, by some dire mistake, threw you alive upon its shore when it swallowed up far better men than you are!"

"It preserved me that I might have the pleasure of taming you, my pretty shrew," he said, bitterly.

"Stand aside, sir, and let me pass!" she cried, indignantly.

"I cannot think of it just at present," he cried, as he folded his arms, and looked upon her with a triumphant smile. "By Jove! you look grandly beautiful in your wrath. I did not think blue eyes could flash so much fire as yours do. I cannot think of letting those pouting lips pass me without paying toll, to say the least."

"Captain Hewlet, you will attempt to detain me at your peril! I will pass!"

"All in good time—when I say the word, fair lady, and not before. I believe that this is the second time I have held you thus at bay in spite of haughty looks and bitter words. The first time, you condescended to shed tears before I permitted you to go."

"I have no tears to shed now, Captain Hewlet. But something else will be shed if you bar my passage much longer. I am not unprotected now."

And quick as thought she drew a revolver from beneath her shawl, and presented it, ready for firing, at his breast.

"Good God, woman, you would not shoot me?" he cried, in alarm, as the deadly tube met his eye.

"Yes, so sure as I live, if you do not immediately leave this spot!" she cried. "You deserve death for your conduct to poor Betsy Hunt," she added, as she advanced steadily toward him, keeping the weapon with a steady aim leveled at his head.

With a bitter curse on his lips, he turned and fled up the steep and narrow path—she following slowly and calmly until she had gained the level plain above.

"I know not how much you know or what you know about Betsy Hunt or her fate," he cried, as he paused one moment in his flight;

"but beware of me. Your fate shall be a thousand times darker than hers. You might have been happy in my love. Now, by all that is good and fair above, or foul and black below, I mean that you shall be miserable in my hate!" And shaking his clenched hand at her, he turned and hurried toward the village.

And she, who had acted so bravely all the time that danger was before her, now trembled, and felt that she was fainting. A dim mist came over her eyes, and she sunk to the ground, barely conscious that some one was approaching her at the moment; but who it was, he did not know.

CHAPTER XLI.

When Rosalette Drummond came back to consciousness, she found her father bending over her, pale and anxious. He had carried her to one of the cool springs which abounded in the neighborhood, and, by bathing her head and face, had succeeded in restoring her.

She smiled faintly when she saw who was by her side, and said:

"I was taken suddenly ill, father. How did you find me?"

"I saw you fall," he replied, "and hurried to you—finding you senseless, with this revolver clenched in your hand. What terrified you so, that you had occasion to draw a weapon which I never before knew that you carried?"

"I have carried this in my walks, ever since Captain Hewlett first frightened and insulted me with his protestations of love," answered Rosalette. "And it was well that I had it with me to-day; for when the insolent coward barred my way, it drove him off in a hurry. I was brave enough until after he fled. Then all my courage forsook me, and I felt myself sinking, in spite of my endeavor to reach home!"

"I did not know that the scoundrel had returned to the village. Release me from my promise, Rosy, and I will go and horsewhip him within an inch of his life!" cried Mr. Drummond.

"I will release you from your promise, father, if you will use no personal violence. He might resist; and, in doing so, injure you; and then I should blame myself. I have rebuked him with scorn, and driven him off in terror, before the muzzle of my pistol. I will not object to your seeing him, and forbidding him ever again to approach me, or speak to me; but I pray you, for my sake, to go no further!"

"Well, child, I will try and keep my hands off from him, to please you; but it will be hard work for me to do it."

"I think, father, you can frighten him out of the village, by pretending to know that he abducted Betsy Hunt," said Rosalette. "I uttered her name in my reproaches, and his face, though dark with anger, in an instant blanched, and he looked as guilty as a thief caught in his criminal acts."

"But if he denies it, and demands my proofs, he may give me serious trouble," said Mr. Drummond, thoughtfully.

"Tell him that you will have them in good time," said Rosalette. "Then give Mr. Hadley, who is a trusty man, funds to enable him to go to Boston and New York, and get the Detective Police to search for the poor girl. I feel confident that she can be found. If Hewlett leaves the village, let him be watched, wherever he goes. He has threatened that I shall be his wife; but I laugh such threats to scorn."

"And well you may, my brave girl!" said Mr. Drummond. "And now, if you feel able, we will go home. You must not go out alone again."

"With this by me, I fear no danger," said Rosalette, as she replaced the revolver in her pocket.

CHAPTER XLII.

Hewlett was warmly welcomed, when he came back from the city, to the sign of the Golden Anchor; for Nehemiah Hunt and his wife both believed the tale which he told—that he had traced Betsy and the peddler to Boston, and thence to New York; and that, after hiding there some time, they had taken passage in a vessel bound to New Orleans by way of Havana. He said he had expended much money and time in the search, and had come upon their last hiding-place only a few hours after they had left it. He would have followed them still; but they had found out that he was after them, and he thought the business could be conducted by agents, to whom he intrusted the work.

"Do you really think that they're married?" asked Mrs. Hunt, with tears in her eyes.

"I cannot say," said Hewlett; "though they lived together as man and wife, I could nowhere find any proofs of the marriage."

"O my poor Betsy—my poor ruined daughter!" moaned the unhappy mother. "I shall never see her again—never, never!"

"And I never want to see her, if she's livin' with a man that isn't her husband," said Hunt, bitterly; and then he shouted for Napoleon.

"Here I be—what's wantin' now, Nehemiah?" asked Steve, as he came snuffling into the bar-room.

"Go and hunt up some eggs. I reckon the Cap'n will like a nogg—won't you, Cap'n?" said Mr. Hunt.

"You make such good ones, that I never can refuse," said Hewlett.

"Well, the reason o' that is, I like 'em myself, and I've had a great deal of experience in makin' 'em. If I had a shillin' a piece in hand now for every nogg I've made in my life-time, I'll bet I'll be most as rich as English Tom, up in the Pines there; and they say he has a mint o' money salted down. But he had lots o' money when he came here. I don't believe he ever run in debt a cent in his life—he always had the hard cash, to spat right down."

"You were here when he came, were you not?" asked Hewlett, with apparent carelessness.

"Yes; I kept tavern then just where I do now—only I've fixed up the place a good deal since then, when I've been able. I remember the very night he got here. It stormed—oh, cricky, how it stormed that night! He was off the coast in an odd-fashioned craft, they called a lugger—an Old Country craft—and got aboard of one of our fishin' craft from here, with three or four big heavy chests, and his two children—the littlest not mor'n a year old, if it was that. The lugger sailed away, and the fishin'-sloop got into the harbor just in time to get clear of one of the cussedest storms that we'd had for ten years. English Tom—or Mr. Drummond, as we call him now—put up at the tavern here for a good while, till he bought into a schooner and got him a house, and then him and his children lived in that, with old Cynthia Martin for a housekeeper. Then he put up his store, and built the cottage up there in the Pines, and quit goin' to the Banks after fish, and went to takin' comfort; and I reckon times are about as easy for him as they are for most o' rich folks in this world. Though he won't be no better off, when they lay him in the grave-yard, than I'll be, when they pile dirt on me."

Napoleon coming in with the eggs just then, the landlord stopped talking and entered into the scientific labor of making egg-noggs for himself and Hewlett.

"How did he look when he first came?" asked Hewlett.

"Much of a muchness as he does now. A little thinner and paler, maybe," replied Mr. Hunt.

"Didn't act strange in no way?" continued Hewlett.

"No, not that I remember. What makes you ask that?"

"Oh, nothing in particular—only it looks rather strange for a man to drop into port the way he did, from a strange vessel—nobody knowing where he came from."

"I don't s'pose anybody cared to know, seein' as how he acted decent and honest, and paid his way as he went along. I'm sure I didn't. He's been a real good neighbor to me, ever since he's been here; and if I was hard run to-morrow, and wanted a hundred or two dollars' help, I'd sooner go to him than any man I ever knew; for I'd be sure of gettin' it. There's your nogg ready, Cap'n. Is it sweet enough?"

"Yes; it is splendid. You cannot be beat at making egg-noggs, Mr. Hunt."

"Not when I've the stuff to put in 'em. That Jamaiky has been in my cellar nigh fifteen years; and the brandy is some Mr. Drummond sold me for old Cogniac, ten years ago. New liquor will curdle the milk I put in noggs; but that old stuff is too mellow for that. Napoleon, what are you doin'?"

"Makin' a stun-fence, Nehemiah."

"Makin' a stone-fence! What, in the name o' Jerusalem, is that?" asked Mr. Hunt, looking over the bar, behind which Steve was mixing something.

"A new drink I heard a feller call for over to the railroad tavern the day I went after Betsy and the peddler! I seen his eyes snap arter he dranked it, and I asked the barkeeper to make me one. He did it, and I felt my eyes snap, and I asked him how he made it."

"Wall, how was it?" asked Mr. Hunt.

"I don't know as 't will do to tell you, Nehemiah—it may wean you off your noggs!" said Steve, with a snuffle.

"No danger o' that—let's know how it's made."

"Wall, it's made out o' three thirds o' raw whisky, the strongest you've got, and another three-thirds of hard cider! Half and half of each!"

"Thunder! It's easy made," said Nehemiah.

"Yes, and goes down easy!" said Napoleon, as he emptied his glass, and gravely looked through the bottom of it.

CHAPTER XLIII.

But a few hours elapsed after Hewlett's interview at the ledge with Rosalette Drummond, when Mr. Drummond paused before the tavern, on the porch of which Nehemiah Hunt sat smoking.

"Do you know where Captain Hewlett is, friend Hunt?" asked the old gentleman.

"I reckon he is up in his room, sir—shall I call him down, or will you walk up?"

"Neither, thank you. When he comes down I wish you would say that I want to see him in my counting-room on business!"

"Yes, sir! Won't you step in and take a leetle drop o' something?"

"No, I thank you. I have not time now."

And Mr. Drummond walked on and entered his store.

A few moments later, Hewlett came down from his room.

"Mr. Drummond was here just now, Cap'n, and said that he'd like to have you come over to his countin'-room. He wanted to see you on business!" said Mr. Hunt.

"Very well—I will go over!" said Hewlett.

"But first you may make me a good stiff brandy-punch."

"Wouldn't you rather have a nogg?" asked Hunt.

"No—I had rather have a punch. I suppose the old man wants to build me another vessel. But I don't think I shall follow the sea much more."

"I don't think I would either if I'd been as near endin' my days in it as you was," said the landlord, as he went behind his bar to concoct the desired beverage.

Hewlett drank it, and then went over to the store. He entered the counting room, which was in the rear of the store, where he found Mr. Drummond alone.

"Oblige me by closing the door behind you, and turning the key, sir!" said Mr. Drummond, who sat at his table at the further end of the room, near the large iron safe. "I wish this interview to be strictly private."

Hewlett's face turned a trifle more pale as he noticed the stern look of the old gentleman. But he felt the effects of the strong liquor which he had just taken, and determined to brazen matters out. So he locked the door, and then advanced to the side of the table opposite to Mr. Drummond, and took a seat which the latter motioned to.

"I have some money of yours on deposit, sir!" said the old merchant. "The amount, with interest to date, is four thousand seven hundred and thirty-three dollars. You will find it in that package. The residue of your wages as Captain of the 'Send', up to the day of her wreck, amounts to two hundred and sixteen dollars. You will find it in this package. Count both sums, and if you find them right, sign the receipts filled out in the receipt-book there."

Hewlett counted the money in each package, silently, and then signed the receipts.

"I have not asked you for this money, Mr. Drummond," said he, as he deposited the bank-notes in his pocket-book.

"I know it, sir; but when I wish to close all business-relations with a man I pay him off, take his receipt, and thenceforth have nothing to do with him," said Mr. Drummond, sternly. "This is sufficiently plain to be understood, is it not?"

"Yes, sir—but I am sure I did not expect to be treated quite quite so cavalierly by you. It is but a few weeks since you offered to buy or build a new vessel for me."

"Yes! I did not know what an infernal scoundrel you were then!"

"Mr. Drummond! Your age alone protects you!" cried Hewlett, reddening with rage. "Were any other man to use that term toward me, I would stave his teeth down his throat."

"I claim no exemption on account of my

age," said Mr. Drummond, looking Hewlet full in the eye. "Offer but to lay a finger on me, and I'll thrash you until you are as weak as you were when my son fished your worthless carcass up out of the ocean. I am somewhat your senior in years, but I am strong enough to thrash you at any and all times. I am not a weak and helpless girl, and shall not point a revolver at you to make you run like a thief and a coward."

"Mr. Drummond, I will make you rue every word you utter. I know now the cause of your anger; but, mark me, sir, I do not fear you."

"Scoundrel—you are paid—now leave this room, and be quick about it, or I will kick you out."

"One word before you commence kicking, Mr. Drummond! You call me a scoundrel. I claim no very high seat in the circle of morality, but I never was a smuggler, a convicted sentenced smuggler, nor yet a murderer!"

Mr. Drummond had risen from his seat and advanced toward Hewlet before these words were spoken, with the intention of actually using force to eject him from the counting-room.

But now, he turned as pale as the unblotted paper on the table before him, and staggered back into his seat as if he had been stricken down by a strong hand.

"What do you mean, man? What do you mean?" he gasped.

"Thomas Drummond knows well what I mean. If he does not, Thomas Dunbarton does!" said Hewlet, with a triumphant sneer.

"It is false! Thomas Dunbarton is dead! He was drowned on the English coast long ago!" cried Mr. Drummond, springing to his feet and staring at Hewlet with glaring eyes.

"Oh, no—oh, no!" said Hewlet, in a cold, mocking tone. "After he had slain the Earl of Deloraine he escaped to—"

"Man—man or devil—hush! Even walls have ears! Hush!" cried Mr. Drummond, in a hoarse whisper, as he sank back into his seat, trembling and quivering as with a fearful ague.

Hewlet made no reply, but resented himself, and smiling more like a devil than a man, waited for Drummond to speak.

Mr. Drummond sat for a time, speechless, pale, and shivering. Then he rose and went to a closet, where bottles and glasses stood on a shelf. He poured out a tumbler nearly full of liquor, and drank it off. Then he returned to his seat. And as the liquor somewhat strengthened his nerves, he said, looking now almost calmly at the man whom he had just been threatening:

"You have in some way, Captain Hewlet, gained a secret which I had believed forever buried in my own breast!"

"I have!" said Hewlet, coolly, while a smile of triumph lighted up his dark features.

"And I suppose you consider that you hold me in your power?"

"I know that I do!"

"Villain—one word aloud, one whisper, and I'll blow you and your secret into eternity!" and Mr. Drummond raised a large dueling-pistol which he had procured when he went to the closet, and full cocked, leveled it at Hewlet's head.

The latter turned as white as snow, and did not move.

"Down on your knees, wretch, and swear that you will never betray the secret you have got possession of, or I will put my finger on the trigger and scatter your brains over the room," continued the merchant, sternly and firmly. "I shall not hesitate; this is a matter of life or death with me!"

"If you kill me, your secret will surely be exposed," said Hewlet, in a low, firm tone. "A written statement, with proofs, is in other hands, sealed, and if I do not return, or harm happens to me, the seal will be broken and you will be exposed, arrested, and sent to England to meet your doom!"

"O my God! am I in that villain's power?" groaned Mr. Drummond, as he lowered the pistol, and again sunk into his seat.

"I think you are, Mr. Drummond; but you need not despair. I am disposed to treat you kindly, notwithstanding the manner in which you have chosen to insult and terrify me. I think if you will listen to reason the secret may be kept, and we can still remain on amicable terms," said Hewlet, in a low and plausible tone of voice.

Mr. Drummond rose, and going to the closet, put away his pistol, and again drank a stimulating glass. Then he returned to his seat, and scarcely raising his eyes, said:

"I suppose by what you last said, that you lay a price upon your secret."

"I do," replied Hewlet, cool now in tone and manner.

"Name the sum. I will pay it, if you will solemnly swear never to reveal what you know," said Mr. Drummond, nervously.

"Your gold will not buy my silence, sir!" said Hewlet. "My price is the hand of the lady known to the world as Miss Rosalette Drummond, but who really is—"

"Hush, hush, for Heaven's sake! Walls have ears, I say!" whispered Mr. Drummond, hoarsely. "Breathe not that name."

"Very well, sir; I will not. Let Rosalette Drummond, as Rosalette Drummond, become my wife, and your secret is safe."

"Man, she fears and hates you!"

"I do not fear, but I do love her!"

"Would you wed an unwilling bride?"

"Yes, if I could not obtain her willingly."

The cold sweat came out and stood in great drops on Mr. Drummond's brow. His agony was pitiful to look upon, but in Hewlet's base heart there was no pity.

"Give me time to consider how to act," said the merchant at last.

"Certainly. I am not disposed to push matters unkindly at present. But as a condition, I shall insist upon being allowed to visit you in your cottage in the Pines on terms of apparent friendship, so that if possible I may erase the dislike which Miss Rosalette has toward me."

"I shall not close my doors to you, but I cannot force her to endure your presence, or make her leave her chamber, if she chooses to remain there when you visit me."

"Well, I shall not insist upon that at present. It will suit my purpose that she sees that you and myself are on a friendly footing; and I insist that she be not informed otherwise by you. On these conditions, I will remain silent for a time, in hope that time may soften her feelings toward me. At the same time, let me assure you not to think for a moment that anything done to put me out of the way will save you. It will only hasten your inevitable doom. Had you executed your mad threat and slain me, the marshal of this district would have known who and what you were, and of the reward yet hanging over your head, almost as soon as my death was noised abroad. And the same result would follow were I missing, so that my friends could not find me. And now, Mr. Drummond, if you are through with me for the day, I will return to my room. I will not disturb you again until you have had plenty of time to regain your usual equilibrium of mind, but to-morrow evening I shall be very happy to take tea with you at the cottage in the Pines."

Mr. Drummond heard all that Hewlet said, but made no reply, and the latter stepped to the door, unlocked it, and went back to the tavern, where he called for another punch, which he drank rather as a sedative than as a stimulant, for he was triumphant now in all his villainy.

"Is Mr. Drummond wantin' to build you another vessel, Cap'n?" asked Nehemiah, as he handed the punch to Hewlet.

"No. He would if I desired it. I don't want you to mention it to any one—in fact, you must not—but the truth is, he wants me to go into partnership with him, so as to take the weight of business altogether off his hands."

"Do tell! Why, what a chance 't would be!" said Nehemiah, in wonder.

"Yes, it would be a very good chance. And I will tell you the rest, if you'll keep it a secret."

"Of course I will," said the landlord. "I won't even tell my wife of it."

"Well, he wants me to marry his daughter. I would, if I could only forget your Betsy."

And Hewlet drank off his liquor, and sighed loudly.

"Betsy was darned fool not to have you," said the landlord, as he poured out a glass half full of brandy and drank it down. "And so Mr. Drummond wants you to hitch on to Miss Rosalette?"

"Yes; that was what he wanted to see me for. She is rather a nice girl."

"Yes, she is that. Not a bit proud or stuck up, and when he dies she'll have a mint of money. It isn't many men that would wait to be asked a second time to have such a girl—they'd jump at the chance, like a mackerel at a bit o' fresh clam, on the Fishin' Banks. You'll have her, won't you, Cap'n?"

"I don't know," said Hewlet, with another sigh. "I must try to forget my old love before I think of a new one. Make me an egg-nog, Mr. Hunt. I feel heavy-hearted."

"Sartin, sartin. But how a man can feel heavy-hearted with such offers before him, is more'n I can comprehend," said Mr. Hunt, as he proceeded to prepare the egg-nog in his usual d'liberate and scientific manner.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Poor Betsy passed a wretched day in her new quarters. Her mind was agitated with fears for the safety of her husband, and when the landlady brought her in dinner, somewhere about two or three o'clock, her conversation was of a character to disgust and shock her listener, for Betsy had not yet learned the impurities and obscenities of city life—or, at least of such city life as this woman represented.

She felt a relief when the woman went away and left her alone; and when she came with lamps in the evening, and asked her if she wished tea, she told her that she did not, but intended to retire early, if Mr. Barnard did not come.

"Oh, he'll be here; you needn't fear but what he'll be here," said the woman, with a hideous leer, intended, doubtless, for a smile, as she left the room.

Betsy paced her room for an hour or more, and then she heard a gentle knock at the door. Supposing it to be Barnard, who had promised to call, if he heard any news from her husband, she hastened to open the door. To her surprise she saw the very clergyman who had, as she supposed, married her to Hewlet. He was dressed in a black suit, wore a white cravat, had long black hair, and wore gold-mounted spectacles.

"How do you do, sir?" she said, as she respectfully handed him a chair. "I suppose Mr. Barnard told you where I was?"

"Yes, Mrs. Hewlet; he represented to me that you were in deep trouble," replied the clergyman, in a subdued tone. "Therefore I thought it my duty to tender to you all the consolation in my power."

"I thank you for your kindness, sir. I am indeed very wretched—not knowing where my husband is, or in what peril he may be."

"Affliction is often sent unto us for our good," continued the clergyman. "And it is our duty to bear it with meekness and without complaint. You expected Mr. Barnard here this evening, did you not?"

"Yes, sir; that is, if he had any news from my husband."

"Mr. Barnard seems to be a very fine man."

"I suppose he is, sir—I know but little about him. He is my husband's friend," said Betsy.

"Mr. Barnard praises you very highly; he thinks you are the most beautiful woman in the world."

"I am sure I do not deserve such a flattering opinion at his hands," replied Betsy, rather surprised at such a remark from a clergyman.

"I think that he will not feel very bad if your husband never comes back," continued the gentleman.

"I am sure, sir, that I do not understand your meaning," said Betsy, still more surprised.

"Only this, my charming Betsy, that Hewlet, your pretended husband, doesn't care a red cent for you, and has deserted you; while I worship and love you, and will take a great deal better care of you than he ever did or could," cried Barnard, throwing off his spectacles, false hair, and white neckcloth, and showing who he indeed was.

Betsy did not faint or go into hysterics. She was too much horrified for that. She seemed to realize in a moment how she had been treated, and what she was; for she now knew that Barnard had officiated as the clergyman in her marriage with Hewlet.

"Deserted? Did you say deserted?" she asked slowly, as if awakening from a dream.

"Yes. Hewlet got tired of you, and deserted you. His pretence of having killed a man was a sham, and had you washed the paint off his face, you would soon have seen that he wasn't hurt."

"Where is he now?"

"I don't know—probably with his real wife, whom he has sadly neglected on your account, my charming Miss Hunt; for it is needless to call you Mrs. Hewlet any longer," replied Barnard.

Betsy rose and went into the bedroom. She returned in a moment with her bonnet and shawl on.

"What are you going to do, Miss Betsy?" asked Barnard, with a quiet smile on his face.

"I am going home!" she said in a determined voice—her eyes rigidly cold, and her face as pale as snow.

"I don't see how you can get home without money," he said, quietly going to the door and standing with his back against it.

"I will beg my way—I will walk, or creep, or die in trying to get there," she said. And the tears began to ooze out from her eyes.

"You forget that I paid your hotel-bill this morning, and am responsible for your board here."

"Oh, Mr. Barnard! as soon as I get home I will send you the money. Do let me go, and I will bless you."

"I am sorry, my dear Betsy, that I cannot. It was a part of the bargain between me and Hewlet, before I assumed the disguise of Mr. John Jenkins Smith, that in the natural course of events you were to fall to me. And I am sure that I do not feel in the least inclined to relinquish a prize which I have served so faithfully for."

"Mr. Barnard, if you are a man, you will let me go," sobbed Betsy, beginning to feel her utter helplessness.

"Being a man, a very susceptible one at that, and madly smitten with your charms, my dear Betsy, I cannot accede to your very impolitic request. You may just as well yield to fate, first as last."

"I never will yield to a fate which will sink me deeper in infamy than I am," replied Betsy, indignantly, dashing the tears from her eyes. "I have sinned, but it has been in ignorance. Open that door and let me pass, or I will scream for help."

"Scream away, my darling—scream away, and see what good it will do you in this house," said Barnard, coolly. "You might have judged what kind of a house it was, from the pictures you so modestly concealed, or the language of the landlady, who has had the taming of a thousand girls as wild'y virtuous as you are. Be calm, and she will come here to comfort you."

"The police will hear me, and break the doors down to rescue me."

"Hardly, my dear. There are four or five thick walls between you and the street in front, and an unoccupied store-house in the rear. So scream, if you wish—exercise your lungs, and see what good it will do."

"Mr. Barnard, I hate you!"

"Do you, my dear? I love you; and so we are even."

"You are a cruel, treacherous monster, sir!"

"And you are a dear, sweet, innocent little beauty! Can't you swear a little? Get our landlady mad, and she'll give you a lesson in that polite and fashionable art."

"O Mr. Barnard, have mercy on me, and let me go."

"I can't—I am a cruel, treacherous monster! And you hate me."

"Oh no—no, Mr. Barnard. Only let me go and I will unsay all my unkind words. I'll call you an angel; I'll pray for you day and night, if you will only let me go out of this house. On my knees I humbly beg you to let me go," sobbed the wretched girl.

"Really, Betsy, you plead so gracefully that I should like to oblige you; but I promised Hewlet that you should not be let loose until you were thoroughly injured in the wicked ways of the town, so that you could not give him any future trouble, and it won't do for me to break my word, you know. So make up your mind to like me as well as you did him, and all will go off well."

"I have made up my mind to die first," cried Betsy, firmly.

"Jim Barnard, what do you stand fooling with the deuced girl for so long? Why don't you slap her face, and show her that you're master? If she puts on many airs with me, I'll rip the fine clothes off from her in a hurry, and make her want to hide herself quicker than she did my fine pictures this morning," screamed the landlady, who had evidently been listening outside the door.

"Oh, let me alone. I know how to get along without your aid, Mrs. Murray," replied Barnard. "Send me up a bottle of wine and a plate of cake, and keep your doors locked."

"Ay, ay! You needn't be afraid of her getting out of here, I can tell you," replied the hag, as she went after the wine.

"Now, if you'll promise to be quiet, and think over matters after I have taken a glass of wine with you I'll leave you in peace to-night," said Barnard, after the footsteps of the landlady had died away. "I don't wish to be harsh or cruel, nor if you had been mine from the first would I have deserted you, as Hewlet has done

if I go to-night, will you try to be a little more reasonable when I come to-morrow, Betsy?"

"I will try—only leave me to-night," sobbed Betsy, willing to make any promise, if she could be left alone to study some plan of escape from a fate far worse than death.

CHAPTER XLV.

The wine was soon brought by the landlady in person, who glared on Betsy with her hideous cross-eyes until the poor sobbing girl hid her face in her hands to avoid looking at her. For there was no look of mercy or pity in that hardened woman's face.

"Put down the wine and cake, and leave me alone, Mother Murray," said Barnard, who saw how frightened Betsy was.

The woman did so, and with a short, horrible laugh, wished Betsy good night, and left the room.

Barnard now spoke in a kinder tone to Betsy, and asked her to take a glass of wine with him.

"Oh, forgive me for refusing, Mr. Barnard; but do not ask me to. I feel as if I was choking; my heart seems as if it was away up in my throat. Do, please, leave me to myself this night, or I shall die!" sobbed the wretched girl.

"Well, Betsy, I will, after I have taken a glass or two of wine. I will, in hopes that you will look at your position more reasonably to-morrow, and not try to avoid what you cannot help. I really do feel sorry for you; but, apart from my own feelings, I am bound to keep you where you cannot trouble Hewlet at present, for I promised him to do it."

"If I was free, I would never mention his name," sobbed Betsy.

"Well, we will see how you feel to-morrow," said Barnard, who, having drank a couple of glasses of wine, rose to go. "Keep your door locked inside, and do not open it again until you hear my voice in the morning; for Mother Murray is a devil if she gets mad at any one, and she hates virtue worse than Satan can hate religion, for it interferes with her business."

Betsy did not need to be told to keep her door locked. Barnard had barely passed the threshold, when the bolt shot back into its place, and the unhappy girl felt safe from immediate danger.

And then she sunk down on her knees and prayed—prayed as she never had before—prayed, oh! how fervently, for help to escape from that terrible place, or for death to release her from peril of infamy.

She felt better, calmer, when she rose to her feet, and she went and sat down by the window and tried to study how she could escape from the house. She had noticed that the little yard in the rear of the house was surrounded by a high wall, over which she could not possibly climb. Therefore, even if she could descend from her window, escape in that direction would be impossible.

At last a fearful thought flashed upon her mind. A thought of an avenue of escape in which Death stood grimly in the passage. She might die, but she would escape, if not with life, then in death.

And quickly she began her preparations. She heaped up the beds and bedding, and the furniture all together, working as still as possible, that no alarm might be given. And then she waited, hour after hour, for the time when the inmates of the house should be asleep. Several times she stealthily unlocked her door, and listened in the passage-way outside. She could hear the shrill sounds of women singing and laughing, and the hoarser voices of men. And the clatter of glasses as the wine passed around.

At last, when it seemed to her that morning must be near, all became still in the house. The sounds of revelry and debauchery had ceased. She opened the windows of the room, so that there might be air to feed the flame. Then she placed a lamp in contact with the inflammable materials which she had heaped together. In an instant, the blaze leaped higher than her head.

She hurried to the door of the room, went out, and locked it outside, so that no one could enter the room to extinguish the flame until it would be too late to do so effectually. Then she crept along in the darkness until she came to stairs, leading down, she knew not where. Down these she crept, and soon found herself on another floor, and in a large hall. Along this she crept, until she found her way barred by a door. She felt for its fastenings, and found that it was locked, and the key taken away; also,

that a large chain was drawn across it, and it also secured in some way. Then she heard heavy steps, as if some one was passing by on a hard pavement, and she felt satisfied that she was by the street-door. Creeping into what appeared to be a recess on one side of the door, she crouched down, and waited for the result of her bold endeavor for freedom.

It seemed to her to be a long time before she heard any sound which indicated that the flames were doing the work of destruction which she had designed. At last, she heard a faint crackling sound, then it grew louder, and she heard the unmistakable roar of the fiery element. But the drunken and weary sleepers in the house woke not—heard it not.

Then she heard the ringing of sonorous bell here and there through the city; she heard hoarse shouts of "Fire, fire!" ringing on the air. Then the sound of wheels rumbling and tearing over the stone pavement. And then came heavy knocks at the door, near which she crouched in trembling silence. But no one came to open the door, though now the loud crackling of the fire and the hot air told that the house was thoroughly ablaze.

A crash—a fearful crash—and the door was torn off its hinges from outside, and a crowd of men in strange dresses rushed past her into the house. And now the inmates of the house seemed to madly, waken to their danger. Shrieks and shouts rung from room to room, and half-dressed men and women were seen rushing in terror down the stairs.

Betsy waited to see no more. She rushed or pushed in some way through the mass of firemen who crowded into and about the burning house. Now she was pushed down and trampled on, but she struggled to her feet, and at last she got clear of the crowd and fled away, she knew not, cared not where. She was free, free at last!

Many people passed her, but no one noticed her. Everybody seemed to be hurrying to the fire, which sent its red glare up to the sky, and threw a pall of smoke black as the den of shame it was destroying all.

Betsy only turned once or twice to look back, and that was when she feared she might be followed. She walked on, growing more and more feeble at every step, until at last she could go no further. She sunk down on the door-steps of a house, and in the gray of the dawning day, she saw a tin sign on the door, on which was painted these words: "Boarding, by the day or week."

She had been sitting there but a little while when two young girls opened the door and came out. They were young, pale, and sickly-looking. Each had a small basket on her arm. They did not seem to notice her at all, though they almost touched her as they passed, but she heard one of them say:

"We must hurry, or we shall be late to work."

Then she heard no noise until it began to be fully light, when a woman of middle age or over came out of the door with a basket on her arm.

"Who're you?" she asked, roughly, as she looked at Betsy, who, faint and not able to move, still sat on the door step. "Can't you speak? Are you drunk? or what's the matter? What are you a loafin' on my door-steps for?"

"Is this your house? Please let me go in and rest myself?" said Betsy, beseechingly.

"Have you got any money? I never take folks into my house without they've got money. My name is Pheby Larkins, and I never keep boarders that can't pay. I've got nice boarders—nice boarders! There's Mr. Squille, the druggist; and Mr. Augur, the carpenter; and Mrs. Hewlet, a sea-capt'n's wife; and—"

"Mrs. Hewlet, did you say?" gasped Betsy, seizing the woman by her arm.

"Yes. Do you know her?"

"I don't know. I did know a Mrs. Hewlet. Oh, take me to this lady. I wish to ask her a question," said Betsy, pleadingly.

"Well, you look like a decent, respectable body. You may come in and sit down in the sittin'-room till I come back from market, for Miss Hewlet isn't up yet, nor nobody else, excepting Bridget, the cook, and a couple of workin' gals that's gone out before this."

And Betsy rose and followed the woman into a dirty front-room on the first floor, where an old rickety and ragged sofa and a few cane-bottomed chairs proclaimed it to be the sitting-room.

"You stay here till I come back; 'twon't be more'n half an hour, and Miss Hewlet'll be up by that time, for she always gets up early when her man is away," said Mrs. Larkins. And then Betsy was left alone.

Her head ached wildly, and her heart throbbed so madly, that it seemed to her as if it would burst from her bosom. Her lips were burning with fever.

"O God! what shall I do, if I am taken sick in this great city!" she moaned. "Thousands upon thousands all around me, and yet not one friend! Oh, if I could only crawl home to ask father and mother to forgive me, and then to die. I could rest in the little village graveyard!"

And she sunk back on the old sofa, and either slept or fell away into a stupor like sleep.

When she knew herself again, the woman, who called herself Phely Larkins was shaking her gently by the shoulder; and another female—a sad-looking, but beautiful woman, gentle in dress and looks—was standing near, regarding her with a kind and pitying look.

"This is Miss Hewlet, you woman," said Mrs. Larkins.

Betsy attempted to rise, but fell back helplessly to her place on the sofa.

"Poor thing! She's dreadful weak!" said Mrs. Larkins. "I'll run and get the camfire!"

"Your name is Hewlet, Madam—do you know Captain Frank Hewlet?" asked Betsy, as the kind-looking lady laid her hand on her burning forehead.

"Yes—that is the name of my husband," said the lady, looking doubly astonished.

"Then, O God! his marriage to me was doubly false!" moaned poor Betsy. And she fainted.

Mrs. Hewlet was dreadfully shocked at the words she had heard. But her true woman's heart would not let her see one of her sex suffering unaided; and when, a moment after, Mrs. Larkins came in, she asked:

"Is not the bed-room next to mine unoccupied?"

"Yes," replied the landlady. "And clean sheets on the bed, too."

"Then help me to carry this poor creature up there. She has fainted; but after we get her in bed, we can bring her to."

"Who'll pay her bill?" asked Mrs. Larkins, whom no distress could blind to business.

"I will. Come, hurry and help me carry her up," cried Mrs. Hewlet.

Betsy was not heavy. Her few days of suffering had thinned her form greatly; and, in a few moments, while yet senseless, she was laid upon a small bed in a room adjoining that which Mrs. Hewlet occupied.

"She is mighty good-lookin', and has good clothes on, and purty jewelery—hasn't she?" said Mrs. Larkins, critically examining her accidental boarder, while Mrs. Hewlet was bathing her temples with camphor. "Look what a purty picture-ring she's got on her finger! And there's di'monds, too. Why, Miss Hewlet, the pictur' on this ring is just like your man! It is his pictur', sure as I live and breathe!"

Mrs. Hewlet turned a little pale, and her compressed lips told that her heart was in agony.

"Get me some water, if you please, Mrs. Larkins," she said.

Then, when the landlady went away, she looked at the ring. It was a large ring with a picture set in it, and that picture was a daguer-type likeness of her husband. Seeing that the ring fitted loosely on the poor girl's finger, she removed it, and looked on the inside. There she saw engraved, "F. H. to B. H."; also a date not a month previous to that day. She quickly replaced the ring on Betsy's finger, for she heard Mrs. Larkins coming with the water.

After some minutes of bathing her head and hands, and a free use of camphor, Mrs. Hewlet succeeded in causing poor Betsy to once more open her eyes; but she was raving with fever, and only uttered incoherent words, which told out too plainly how much she had suffered.

"We must have a physician here," said Mrs. Hewlet.

"Won't Mr. Squills do? He boards here, and won't charge much," said Mrs. Larkins.

"No. A good regular physician is needed. Go and call Doctor Passamore, or send for him. I will be responsible for all the bills this poor girl has to pay."

"Maybe she is a relation of your man's, seein' she has his pictur' on her ring. 'B. H.' is marked on her handkercher, I see," said Mrs. Larkins.

"Very likely. Go for the doctor right away, Mrs. Larkins, and then come here and stay with the poor girl until I can dress Rosy, who is up and awake, for I hear her singing in my room."

"Yes, ma'am. I'll send out for the doctor

right away. I guess Mr. Squills will go for him, for then he'll get the job of furnishin' the medicine, sure."

And away darted the landlady, ever thoughtful of the ways of making everything pay.

CHAPTER XLVI.

On the same day that Hewlet had his interview with Mr. Drummond in his counting-room, but an hour or two later, the mail arrived. Two or three egg-noggs, and several "brandies plain", had put Nehemiah Hunt in a tolerably lively humor; and, as he opened the mail, he read out the superscriptions of the letters somewhat in his old eccentric way.

"Jemima Bombazine!" he cried. "Where's the Widder Bombazine? Here's a letter from some of her beaux, I reckon. Johnny Haight! I wonder who thinks enough of peak-nosed Haight to write to him? Gideon Webber! Where's that limpin' tailor, I wonder? Elder Noble! Here, Napoleon, carry that right over to the minister's house. Cap'n Frank Hewlet! Here's a letter for you, Cap'n. And that's all this time."

And Nehemiah having delivered or put away the letters, now came out from the post-office corner of the room, and went behind the bar to refresh.

"Great Heavens! Burned alive!" said Hewlet, in a tone of horror, as, with a pale face, he read the letter which he had just received.

"What is the matter, Cap'n! what is the matter?" asked Mr. Hunt, attracted both by his words and the sudden pallor of his face.

"A friend of mine has been burned to death in a great fire in New York," stammered Hewlet, turning alternately red and pale. "Horrible! horrible!"

And he staggered toward the bar, and drank a glass of water.

"I should say 'twas a shockin' way of dyin'," said Nehemiah, gravely. "Take somethin' stronger than water, Cap'n. You look as if you needed it."

"Do I? Pour me out some brandy, then. This sudden news startled me—it was so unexpected."

"There's the decanter. Pour out for yourself, Cap'n. I don't like to pour out for other folks, nor to have them pour out for me," said Hunt. "A man always knows his own gage better than anybody else does."

Hewlet poured out a stiff horn, and drank it off. He then twisted up the letter which he had just read, and igniting it with a match, burned it to ashes.

"That's the way to serve bad news," he said, with a sickly smile, as he proceeded with a very nervous hand to light a cigar.

"Was it a very big fire?" asked Mr. Hunt, who, having mixed one of Napoleon's "stone-fences", was drinking it.

"Yes; a very large dwelling-house, a storehouse, and a good many other buildings damaged," said Hewlet, regaining his composure.

"I s'pose they have some monstrous big fires in the city?" continued Hunt.

"Yes; once in a while. But, generally, the firemen get ahead of fires too soon to permit them to spread much. Now that they have steam fire-engines, they do not give fires much of a chance for headway."

"What! engines that work by steam to put out fire!"

"Yes; engines which run along the streets, propelled by steam, and when they get to a fire, throw a half-dozen jets of water over the tallest houses with the same power!"

"Wall, I wonder when wonders will stop a comin' into the world. There was a lecturin' chap here a while ago, who said that *chimists* had got to makin' fire out o' water. I didn't believe him; but he got out some sort of machinery he had, and put water in a fixin', and I'll be swizzled if he didn't make that water blaze right up! It has got so now, that a chap may as well believe whatever he hears as not. They've got to pumpin' up 'sile out of the ground in Pennsylvania, I hear, and the whalin'-business is about done away with. I expect afore long they'll grow fish from seed just as they do corn; and that'll knock the fishin'-trade all to smash. There's one comfort for me, though. I don't believe they can make a machine to keep a tavern with, no way!"

And Mr. Hunt filled his pipe, and took his seat in the big arm-chair on the porch.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Rosalette Drummond was sitting on the broad and vine-embowered piazza of the Cottage in the Pines, in the afternoon of the day which succeeded that on which Hewlet's interview occurred with Mr. Drummond, in his counting-room, as described in a former chapter. She, like most ladies who do something when they have nothing to do, was working out something or other in crochet; and Mr. Drummond, as was his wont when anything troubled him, was walking furiously to and fro, emitting huge volumes of smoke from his carved pipe of fragrant wood.

Suddenly, Rosalette, who had cast a careless glance down the avenue which led toward the house from the village, rose to her feet; for she saw, though yet quite distant, the well-known and hated person of Captain Hewlet walking slowly and deliberately toward the house.

"Father, look there!" she exclaimed, indignantly. "Do you see who is approaching?"

"Yes," said he. And a low curse rolled from his lips, while his brow darkened. "I expected he would come; and it is that which has troubled me all the afternoon!"

"Troubled you, father? Why, surely you do not fear him? You will not permit him to come here?"

"Child, I cannot now explain all to you. But that man has it in his power to ruin me! I must temporize with him. For Heaven's sake, do not look at me that way, Rosy. You need not see him. Go to your room, and stay until he is gone, if you wish. You see how miserable I am. I will explain to you when I can; now, it is impossible!"

"Oh! if I only had my way, I would spurn him from the door sooner than I would the mangiest cur that ever rolled in a kennel," said Rosalette, as she rose and hurried away to her chamber, astonished beyond measure at the avowal which Mr. Drummond had blushed to make.

Meanwhile, Hewlet, with a cool and easy air of assurance, looking and acting as if he owned every foot of the broad domain which he paced, advanced toward the house, and ascending the broad steps of granite to the porch, bowed in a monchalant manner, as he said:

"Good evening, Mr. Drummond! I thought, as the air was cool and agreeable, I would walk over, according to promise, and have a chat with you!"

"There is a chair, sir!" said Mr. Drummond, with freezing politeness, pointing to a seat.

"Thank you. You have a charming view from here—can see just enough of the distant ocean to relieve the monotony of the land, and just enough of the houses in the village to feel that you have neighbors!" continued the unabashed villain.

Mr. Drummond made no answer; but his rapid pace, and the quick, white puffs from his mouth and pipe, told that the steam in his boiler was far above safety-point.

"I observed your daughter on the porch as I approached. I hope she is well."

"Not well enough to see company that is disagreeable to her," replied Mr. Drummond, curtly.

"I am sorry that she evinces such an intense dislike for one who has every desire to make himself agreeable to her!" said Hewlet, drawing a cigar from his case, and lighting it with a match from his pocket. This is a capital place to enjoy a cigar when ladies are not present."

He smoked on in silence for some time, his attitude showing that he felt himself perfectly at home; for, seated in one chair, he placed his feet on another, and drew up a third to rest his left arm upon, his right hand being used occasionally to shake off the ashes from his cigar.

"It is a long time since you visited England, I believe, Mr. Drummond!" said Hewlet, after an unbroken silence of at least a quarter of an hour.

"It will be longer yet before I visit it again," said Mr. Drummond, turning almost fiercely upon his persecutor.

"Perhaps—perhaps! That depends entirely upon circumstances, Mr. Drummond," said Hewlet, emphatically.

"Man, have you come here to threaten me?"

"Oh, no, not at all. But I only wish to remind you that civil treatment will render me a more agreeable visitor to you—that is all."

"What do you want? Wine, or brandy? If so, I will order it. Or if you are hungry, I will have you fed," said Mr. Drummond, writhing in an anger which he dared not give loose to.

"No, thank you! I am neither dry nor hun-

gry. I can get abundance of food and drink where I pay for it, at the tavern. But I want and demand civil treatment at your hands. And, Sir—you need not frown and clench your hands—I will have it."

"Hewlet, I have a great mind to blow out your brains, and my own, and end this matter at once."

"Well, do it, and leave your son a knowledge of who and what you are and have been for his heritage. And leave the girl who scorns me to look upon your memory in horror as the murderer of—"

"Stop, man; stop for the sake of holy heaven, stop! Say no more. I will be humble. I pray you to be merciful!" gasped the merchant, turning so pale that there seemed to be no blood left in him.

"Ah! I thought you would be more reasonable. I don't care if you do open a bottle of your old wine; it will look friendly-like to see us touching glasses!" said Hewlet, as calmly as if he and Mr. Drummond were on the best of terms.

"Bring wine and glasses here!" cried Mr. Drummond, hoarsely, to a servant whom he saw at the other end of the porch.

"What kind, Sir?" asked the servant, respectfully, as he approached, to hear his orders more distinctly.

"What kind do you prefer, Captain Hewlet?" asked Drummond, with a forced composure. "Port or sherry, madeira, or something lighter?"

"Port, by all means, my dear Mr. Drummond; port, by all means, as an evening accompaniment to a pipe or a cigar."

"Port let it be, then!" said Mr. Drummond.

"And bring me a glass of ice-water, too, my man," cried Hewlet, in the same tone of cool and lordly assurance.

In a few moments, one servant brought a small table out on the porch, and another placed on it wine-glasses, tumblers, a pitcher of ice-water, and a bottle of choice old port-wine, the cork just drawn.

The servants, then, at a sign from Mr. Drummond, left the two gentlemen alone.

"Capital wine, this—capital!" said Hewlet, as he poured out a glass, tasted it, and holding it up between him and the setting sun, admired its color. "My friend, Oldcask, the great importer, has no better, and I have been through and through his wine-bins."

Mr. Drummond barely raised his glass to his lips, and then set it down untasted.

"Really, friend Drummond, you seem afraid of your own wine! If I had not warned you that any harm befalling me would result most disastrously to yourself, I should be tempted to think that this wine had been prepared especially for me," said Hewlet, in the same tone of provoking coolness which he had used all the time.

"Man, you need not fear poison at my hands. I am willing that the hangman should have his due!" said Mr. Drummond, bitterly.

"If he had, where would you be, friend Drummond?" said Hewlet, not at all abashed by the merchant's evident meaning. "But all jokes apart, this wine is too good to be neglected. Here is to the health of lovely Miss Rosalette."

Mr. Drummond's eye flashed, but he dared not resent the persecutions which he suffered. But after choking down his passion, he at last said: "Will not money buy you off from persecuting me here in my own home? Tell me if it will, and name your price."

"Really, Mr. Drummond, you make me feel bad by terming me a persecutor."

"That is not answering me, sir! Will not money purchase for me at least an immunity for your intrusions in this house? If you must see me, let our interviews take place in my counting-room."

"That would be entirely dissonant with my views in visiting you here, Mr. Drummond. Now you will observe that if I am permitted to visit you on a friendly footing here, chance must at times favor me with a passing glance at, if not an occasional interview with, Miss Rosalette. Becoming used to see me frequently, her antipathy, which I am assured is groundless, will gradually wear away, and—"

"Never, you insolent, cowardly puppy! Never!" cried Rosalette, who had noiselessly approached Hewlet, while he was speaking in the most taunting tones. "I have seen how you annoy my poor father, and I come to tell you that if you do not go away and leave him in peace, I will chastise you with my own hand, using a good raw-hide for the purpose."

"Your father!" sneered the villain.

"Yes, my father; the only father I ever knew, or ever will know, notwithstanding the lies you would have me believe. Hush, sir—not a word—open not your mouth to me, or I will shoot you down as mercilessly as I would if you were a mad dog. Leave—leave this instant."

And the startled villain again found her revolver at his head; and in spite of his bold face of the moment before, he fled a second time from before the noble girl.

"Thomas Drummond," he shouted, when he was out of range of her weapon; "I give you one hour to come to the village and arrange matters with me; if you do not, you know well what I will do, and all your gold cannot save you."

And he hurried away, going ten times as fast as he came.

"Father, why do you fear that coward?" cried Rosalette.

"Alas! my brave girl, I dare not tell you. I am too truly in his power, and if he fulfills his treat, I shall be dragged away from your side in chains."

"In chains?" gasped Rosalette.

"Yes, in chains. Torn from you and my peaceful home, and taken back to the land which has seen my happiest and my darkest days, to meet—I dare not tell you what."

"Father, you rave—you surely rave."

"I do not, my child—would to God I did!" groaned the poor old man, weeping in agony.

"Father—dear father, is there anything that I can do to save you—to avert the direst peril which so terrifies and unmans you?"

"There is, my girl—there is—but I will perish before I ask the sacrifice from you."

"Speak not of that—tell me what I can do to save you?"

"I cannot. That man demands your hand as a price for releasing me from the sword which he holds above my head!"

Rosalette shuddered, but did not speak.

"If I could but temporize with him in some way—if I could only do that and save you, my girl, I would willingly yield up the few years of life that are left to me!"

"Temporize, father? If I admit his visits will he cease to persecute you?"

"I think he will; that was all he asked, at present."

"Then I will admit them. But let him beware how he acts toward me. The first insulting word he ever utters to me will be the last he speaks on earth. Go and tell him, that if he behaves himself respectfully toward you and me, he may visit here. But give him no other encouragement."

"I will," said Mr. Drummond, sadly, and he put on his hat and walked toward the village.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Hewlet stood upon the porch of the tavern, with a malignant and triumphant smile mantling his Satanic face, when he saw Mr. Drummond coming from his cottage to the village. He knew that fear alone brought the proud old man there, and that he dreaded the fulfillment of a threat which Hewlet could not have fulfilled if he wished to do so, for all that he knew of the "smuggler's secret" had been obtained at a time when Mr. Drummond, having drunk too freely, had, in maudlin confidence, at once forgotten with returning sobriety, told him something of his former life, his reasons for leaving England his supposed death on that coast, and his escape to this country in a smuggling lugger, owned by one of his old companions.

But poor Drummond did not know how little real power Hewlet had to harm him. If he had, a horsewhip would soon have driven the wretch from his presence; for such a tale as he would have told, unsupported by proofs, and denied by Mr. Drummond, would not have been believed in the village where the old gentleman had been so long and so favorably known.

Hewlet's eye met Mr. Drummond's glance as he approached. The latter made a motion with his hand toward the store.

"Want to see me over at the counting-room, friend Drummond?" asked Hewlet, loudly and in a purposely-familiar tone, so that Mr. Hunt and three or four others of the villagers who were by could hear it.

"Yes, Sir!" said Drummond, as he hurried on.

"I will be along in four or five minutes!"

said Hewlet, with apparent carelessness. Then turning to the landlord, he added:

"I think I'll try a brandy-punch before I go over, Mr. Hunt."

"Yes. The old gentleman must be bent on putting things through!" said Nehemiah, as he went to mixing the liquor which Hewlet ordered. "He'll have you hitched on to his gal afore a month has gone by!"

"I'm almost afraid he will, myself!" said Hewlet with a well-simulated sigh.

And he drank his punch complacently, then lighted a cigar, and, with a leisurely step, sauntered over to Mr. Drummond's store.

"There's many a young man would like to be in his shoes—Cap'n Hewlet's, I mean!" said Hunt to his gossip-loving friends, as he resented himself in his old arm-chair.

"How so, Nehemiah? What's up?" asked one of them.

"You'll know by-and-by. I've promised not to tell!" said Hunt, with one of his oracular looks, such as he always put on when he told people who would be the next President. "He's in a streak of luck—that's all I can say, just now. He'll write esquire behind his name yet, and like as not go to Congress or some other place o' worship!"

Mr. Drummond had not taken a seat when Hewlet entered the counting-room, but was walking to and fro, distractedly.

"Hewlet!" said he, hurriedly, as the Captain closed the door, and coolly took a seat. "Hewlet, I have come to make a compromise with you!"

"Have you brought that mad girl's revolver with you as the basis?" asked Hewlet, with a sneer.

"No; she is excitable and rash, while I am cool, as you see—very cool."

And the poor old man shook and trembled like an aspen leaf, though he did not appear to know it.

"Yes; I see you are cool. But a little drop of the old brandy in yonder closet would help to steady your nerves!"

Mr. Drummond seemed to think so, too; for he went and took some.

"Ah! you appear decidedly more composed, Sir. Now, I will hear what kind of compromise you have to offer!" said Hewlet.

"My daughter is willing to admit your visits, on friendly terms, to my house, provided you treat her and myself respectfully!" said Mr. Drummond, mastering his feelings enough to barely speak intelligibly.

"So she has dismounted from the high horse she was riding. Well, I don't know as I care to ask for anything further, just at present. As I told you at first, I am disposed to act reasonably with you, and it will be your fault or hers if I am driven to harsh measures. I will dine with you to-morrow, if you have no objections!"

"Of course I cannot object, if such is your will!" said Drummond, with a slight bitterness in his tone. "And now, as I have done what I came for, I will return to my Cottage."

"And I to my room, to enjoy my cigar and a glass of old wine. If you are not in a hurry, I should be glad to have you join me!"

"I am in a hurry!" said Mr. Drummond, hastily retiring.

"I've got him on the hip, completely!" said Hewlet, with a triumphant laugh, as he followed him. "And I'll have his daughter, or rather Miss Rosalette, for a bride before I'm six weeks older. Then huzza for England, to see what I can make by her there. I'm glad Master Ethelbert is out of the way. He might interfere with my special arrangements if he was here. And poor Betsy—I am sorry for her, though I'm glad she is forever out of my way. But to be burned to death is shocking. Barnard says he nearly lost his life in trying to save her; but the obstinate little fool would not unlock her door, though the house was in a blaze. I shouldn't have been very sorry if he had been smothered then and there; for then there would not have been a living witness of the way I managed matters with the poor girl. But she's gone. I'll go over to my room, and empty a bottle to her memory, though I'd be devilish glad to forget her, if I could!"

CHAPTER XLIX.

No sooner had Mr. Drummond left his cottage, on his way to see Hewlet, than Rosalette dispatched a servant to Captain Hadley with a note, requesting him to come to see her, in great haste, on a private and very important matter.

Captain Hadley, who had at one time been her father's partner in the ownership of a fishing vessel, and always a valued and trusted friend, hurried back with the servant, wondering what Rosalette could possibly want of him.

When he reached the house he was ushered into a room, where she sat alone, tearful and very sad.

"How do you do, Miss Rosalette? You look as pale as a ghost. It won't do to call you rosy now!"

"My health is not poor, Captain Hadley, but I feel very badly for all that!" said Rosalette. "If you will keep a secret for me, and undertake a journey which I cannot take myself, you will do me and my poor father a favor that can never be repaid and never will be forgotten!" said Rosalette.

"My dear girl, you know that I ever stand ready to do anything in my power to serve you or your good father. But I am at a loss to think what can trouble either of you?"

"Ah, Sir, I cannot tell you all; but this I know will be enough to enlist your sympathy and aid. In some way, Captain Hewlet, whom I know to be a villain and a libertine of the basest stamp, has obtained an important secret which in some way involves my father—some matter of times long gone by—of which I do not know the precise nature. This he holds over my father to try to force a marriage with me, when he knows from my own lips that I hate and loathe the sight of him."

"The unprincipled scoundrel! He ought to be horsewhipped. Does he forget that your brother saved his worthless life?" cried honest Captain Hadley.

"He forgets everything but his base and selfish purpose in regard to me; and he only wants me because he thinks I will inherit a portion of my father's wealth."

"The mercenary wretch! But you have not told me, Miss Rosy—for you are rosy now—how I can aid you?"

"By securing, as I am sure you can, proof of his having committed a crime, which will at least send him to State Prison. I am sure that he abducted poor Betsy Hunt, and for her ruin."

"Why, she ran off with a peddler!"

"No, Sir; that man was not a peddler. He gave away jewelry in the village, but where was he known to sell an article? His dress, his language, his manners, all showed that he was in disguise; and I am confident that he was a confederate in the employ of Hewlet. I charged the latter with the crime, and his crimsoned face and downcast eye acknowledged in an instant the guilt, which even his tongue dared not deny."

"You astonish me, Rosy! But there are many things which rush to my mind to convince me that your suspicions are not without good foundation. But how can I detect the villain?"

"By going to the cities of Boston and New York, securing the aid of some skillful detective police-officer, and describing the pretended peddler, Hewlet, and Betsy. Discover the poor girl, and bring her back to her parents. If he is the guilty man I believe him to be, Betsy's evidence will send him to the State Prison, and I and my father will be relieved from his persecution."

"You are right, Rosy—you are right. I will start to-morrow morning."

"Thank you, Captain Hadley—oh, a thousand thanks! and I will pray for your success all the time you are gone."

"Bless you, my dear girl! I will do my best."

"I know you will, Captain Hadley. And to aid you, take this pocket-book. There are five hundred dollars in it—all saved from my father's generous allowance to me of pocket-money."

"Tut, tut! my dear girl! I sha'n't take your money. I can pay my own expenses!"

"I know it, Captain Hadley; but you must take this, for the detectives will work a great deal sharper if you reward them liberally; and I shall feel a great deal happier if my money helps to bring back poor Betsy to her parents, and to bring that monster to justice."

"Well, to please you, I will take it, Rosy."

"Thank you, Captain Hadley! Now, do not let your business be known here—not even to my father. Leave town as quietly as you can, without letting any one think you are going to the city; for Hewlet must not be put on his guard, or your wisest schemes will fail."

"That is so. I will leave to-night; and my

own family shall be led to think that I am going north to see a relative I have on the Canada line. Now, good-bye! I must hurry to get ready, to be off before day dawns."

And the warm-hearted old sea-captain hurried out, meeting Mr. Drummond in the avenue, on his return from the village.

"How are you, Mr. Drummond—how are you? I was up your way, and called to see how you all were," cried the old Captain.

"I am not well," said Mr. Drummond.

And he really looked ill. A few days of such misery as Hewlet had given him was enough to alter his appearance fearfully.

"I hope you'll be better when I see you again," said Hadley, hurrying on; for he did not want to be questioned.

"Ill! Yes, sick at heart and soul—sick almost unto death!" muttered the unhappy merchant, as he went into his house.

CHAPTER L.

True to his word, as he ever was where evil rather than good depended upon it, Frank Hewlet made his appearance at the Cottage in the Pines at twelve o'clock on the next day after his hurried retreat from the muzzle of Rosalette's pistol.

He was dressed with the most elaborate care; and if it had not been for the unmistakably-pompous air of assumed gentility which marks the man of low breeding who has succeeded in getting good clothes on his back, and the stamp of villainy which Providence had kindly placed on his good-looking face, he might have been mistaken for a gentleman by a stranger.

Both Mr. Drummond and Rosalette were on the porch, ready to receive him. For the latter, learning that he was determined to force his company there, had formed her plans to render herself just as hateful as possible, and to make him just as uncomfortable as she could. She was dressed in an old, dirty, calico dress, borrowed from a servant for the occasion; her hair, purposely tangled, hung all about her shoulders; her little feet were encased in a pair of old cast-off slippers, a great deal too large for her; and her face looked as if she had been cleaning pots in a sooty chimney-corner.

Hewlet bowed quite low to Mr. Drummond, as he advanced, but a great deal lower to Rosalette.

"I am most happy to see you, Miss Drummond," said he. "You look charmingly to-day."

"Do I? Since you say so, Sir, I suppose I do. If you've come to get your dinner, you've come most too early; we don't feed till two o'clock," replied Rosalette, with provoking coolness.

"I shall be in no haste to dine, provided that I can be entertained by your charming presence," said Hewlet, trying not to notice her evident intention to annoy him.

"I don't entertain folks," she said, with a look of contempt. "Sometimes I entertain myself talking with the dog, the cat, the pigs, or some of their kindred; so I suppose I am capable of entertaining two-legged beasts when I feel like it."

Mr. Drummond, who had looked angry and pale as Hewlet came up, now began to appear amused; for Rosalette's cool manner reassured him, and he began to think she would soon sicken him of his visits.

Hewlet made no reply, but took a seat, evidently struggling to keep from exhibiting anger, though he doubtless felt it.

"Have you any objection to my smoking in your presence, Miss Drummond?" he asked at last.

"None in the world," said she. "Chimneys smoke, and if a man wants to make a chimney of his mouth, why should a woman object. Wouldn't you like some buttermilk with your cigar? You look thirsty."

"No, thank you, fair lady. It seems to me that you are in a dry humor to-day."

"Yes. I have such turns every time the moon changes. How was Betsy Hunt the last time you saw her?"

"Miss Drummond, I believe you design to insult me!" cried Hewlet, turning ghastly pale, and rising from his seat.

"I never knew that a gentleman could be insulted by being asked how his lady-love was," said Rosalette, with a sarcastic smile.

"Miss Hunt is nothing to me, or any one else in this world. She is dead, thank God!" cried Hewlet, utterly forgetting himself in his anger.

"Dead! Then she has been murdered—mur-

dered! and you, Sir, are her murderer, or the cause of it!" cried Rosalette, confronting him sternly, and looking him through and through with her fearless eyes.

Hewlet quailed before her look and glance, and sunk back into his chair, speechless for a moment. But he soon regained the assurance that had left him for a moment.

"I do not know that she is dead. I only heard so," he stammered.

"You just thanked God that she was dead," said Rosalette, still keeping her eyes fixed on his face; "but, Sir, if she is, her blood will cry out from the grave, even as the blood of Abel called for vengeance; and if she is not, justice will not sleep until her wrongs are avenged. And now, Sir, let these thoughts remain on your mind to give you an appetite for dinner. I will leave you to entertain your own interesting self until that hour arrives."

And Rosalette went into the house, leaving the abashed villain cowering with fear and choking with an anger which it maddened him to restrain.

"The foul fiend take the woman!" he gasped. "If she were but a man, the words she utters should be choked back down her throat. As it is, I must bear it, or lose the game I am playing for."

Then, as he again resumed some command over his feelings, he said:

"Miss Rosalette is decidedly humorous this morning, Mr. Drummond."

"I am glad you find her so, sir," said Mr. Drummond, scarcely trying to restrain a triumphant smile. "She doubtless will entertain you still more agreeably at the dinner table. She is proud of exhibiting her accomplishments when she feels like it."

"So, I see," said Hewlet, throwing away the cigar he had crushed out in his anger and lighting another.

From that time, until a servant summoned them to dinner, Hewlet never uttered a word, but sat and smoked cigar after cigar, as if he used the weed for a sedative. For his flushed and angry face told that he needed no stimulant.

Rosalette made her appearance at the table, not at all improved in dress, and Hewlet and Mr. Drummond took their seats in silence.

"Won't you say grace, Mr. Hewlet? Or don't you know how?" said Rosalette, looking as quiet and demure as if she meant no harm in the questions.

"I am too graceless to say grace, I fear, Miss Rosalette. Perhaps you will officiate," said Hewlet, trying to force out a smile on his angered face; but making a miserable job of it.

"Yes—I can do it!" she said. Then, in a tone, deep, solemn, and thrilling, she said:

"Thou, Lord, who knowing all hearts, can read the wild and wicked thoughts that are in them, bless this food and drink to those who are pure and trust in Thee; but oh! make it as gall and as wormwood to those whose minds are evil! Curse them in their eating and drinking! Curse them in their waking and sleeping! And thwart them in all their wickedness, and in the end let hell-fire be their portion. Amen!"

Hewlet heard and trembled—trembled and turned as white as the cloth that covered the table.

"Help Captain Hewlet to some wine, father," said Rosalette. "He looks pale. I am afraid his appetite will not do justice to our regal fare!"

And she glanced at a plate of codfish-balls at one end of the table, and a platter of pork and beans at the other.

Hewlet saw that Rosalette's plan was to drive him from the house by her continued annoyances, and he determined not to be driven thence by anything she could do, and to bear her merciless sarcasms without appearing to heed or feel them.

"I did not know before that you were piously inclined, Miss Drummond," said he, in a most serious tone.

"Oh, I always am in gooseberry season!" said she. "Shall I help you to a plate of pork and beans?"

"Yes, if you please. It is a dish of which I am particularly fond," he replied.

"Cannibalism will never cease!" said she, as she put a large piece of pork on his plate, and then followed it with a spoonful of beans.

Hewlet had hard work to keep his resolution. He detested pork and beans, and would have stopped his steward's grog aboardship if he had ever mentioned, much less cooked, codfish balls.

But he managed to eat a few mouthfuls, though it went sadly against the grain.

"Father, Captain Hewlet wants the wine," said Rosalette, pointing to a bottle which she had placed on the table.

Mr. Drummond passed the bottle to Hewlet, who filling his glass, raised it to his lips, as he gallantly said:

"I drink to your health, Miss Drummond!"

He swallowed a part of the contents of the glass, the rest he squirted from his mouth, while a look of nausea and disgust flushed over his face.

"Why, what is the matter with your wine, Captain?" asked Rosalette, with mock earnestness.

"It is bitter as gall, and I presume you are aware of it!" replied Hewlet, who could scarcely restrain the curses which rose to his very lips.

"Bitter? Taste it, father—I am sure it is your favorite sherry," said Rosalette, with perfect composure, and a most innocent air.

Mr. Drummond poured out a glass, and tasting it, said:

"It is my old Amontillado Sherry—the finest flavored in my cellar. I can perceive no bitterness in the taste of it."

"Then there certainly has been a miracle if Captain Hewlet's wine has turned to gall!" said Rosalette. "It will not do for me to pray if my prayers are so speedily answered!"

"You think to annoy me, and make me lose my temper by your tricks, Miss Rosalette," said Hewlet, gravely. "But I assure you that you will fail. I will not get angry with you!"

"Thank you, Captain Hewlet—thank you. I shall feel so much easier when I am assured that you will not get angry with me! You cannot imagine how relieved I am! Since you are so unfortunate with your wine, shall I not order a glass of weak milk and water for you?"

"No thank you, Miss Drummond—it might sour. I have dined sumptuously, thank you—I will enjoy my cigar on the piazza."

"Won't you have coffee? I have some very fine—I prepared it from rye and beans—an equal quantity of each—an economical discovery of mine!"

"Thank you, fair lady, I will dispense with the coffee this time. And I hope you and your father will excuse me—I will await you on the porch," said Hewlet, who felt sick at the stomach, and feared some mishap even at the table.

"What made his wine taste so, Rosalette?" asked Mr. Drummond, the instant their unwelcome guest went out.

"A few drops of tincture of aloes, father, put in the bottom of his glass, where he did not observe it before he poured out his wine. That was all!"

"And enough! Lord, what a wry face he made," said Mr. Drummond, with a laugh.

"He'll make worse faces than that before I am through with him," said Rosalette, with a wicked smile.

CHAPTER II.

Wearied almost to death—worried in body and mind by a three days' unavailing search through all the purlieus of Boston—or Athens as its literati would have it—Captain Hadley found himself landed at early morning from one of the steamers of the Bay State line, in that city of cities, New York.

Hadley was not a city-man, either in principle or knowledge, and his experience in Boston had not tended to make him think that cities were desirable places even for temporary sojournment. There he had seen squalid beggars, sightless, maimed, disgusting, sitting unheeded near the porches of grand churches; he had, in his travels with the hired policeman who, for a heavy fee, was induced to aid him in his search for poor Betsy Hunt, seen sights which made him shudder; and having been told that New York was a thousand times worse than Boston—moral Boston—it was with dread that he put his foot on the wharf. Nothing but his mission from Rosalette Drummond could have induced him to enter this second city.

"Hack, sir! Hack!" from a thousand throats, was his first salutation.

Unheeding the cries of the Jehus, who were so anxious to accommodate "a customer from the country", which his dress and uneasy manner at once told them that he was, he tried to pass through the throng; but in a moment he found his carpet bag snatched from his hand by a stalwart man, who shouted:

"This way, sir—this way! Best carriage in town. Take you just where you like. Come along, sir; come along!"

And he had to go along, or else lose his carpet-bag, which contained not only the spare shirts which his good spouse in Ledgetown had put up for his use, while on his visit to his Northern relative, but also the pocket-book which Miss Drummond had given him to use while on his mission.

In a few moments he found himself almost shoved into the "finest carriage in the city", and it appeared to him to be very old, its cushions very dirty and ragged, and odoriferous, also, of what seemed to him to be whisky and tobacco-smoke.

"My carpet-bag, man—my carpet-bag!" he cried, as the driver was about to close the carriage-door.

"We always carry baggage on the box—always, sir. Now, shall I drive you to a first-class hotel. I know a splendid one in Mulberry street, another in Lispenard—or would you like a private boarding-house in Church street?"

These words came so rapidly from the lips of the driver that the poor Captain was utterly confounded—so confused that he could make no answer—but his coolness of head was not quite gone, for he made a reach for his carpet-bag, which the pertinacious driver had not yet deposited on the box.

But his hand was not quick enough. The driver saw the motion and drew back.

"We always hold on to baggage till we land our passengers and get our fares. You can't come any games on me, old chap. Say where you'll go to, and be quick for we're blocking up the way, and the M. P.s will make us move along soon."

"Take me to the Head-quarters of the Police!" shouted Hadley, getting mad.

"All right, sir. Why didn't you say so before!"

And the driver slammed the carriage-door to, and disappeared with the carpet-bag.

In a moment more the carriage moved rapidly on, and the Captain, feeling that he could not for the moment better himself, gazed with wondering eyes out upon the busy throngs which, like swarming bees, seemed to fill the streets, though all in motion—upon the lofty houses, the stores, whose windows glared with what seemed to him the wealth of the Indies—scenes so much more busy and buildings so much more lofty than those he had seen in Boston, that he fancied New York to be indeed ahead of, but not worse in appearance, if in morality, than the former city.

Through street after street, turning a corner every few moments, and going so rapidly that he was completely bewildered as to the course he had taken from the boat, the old Captain was glad when at last the carriage stopped, for he supposed, of course, that he was at the Head-quarters of the city Police, where, as in Boston, he could employ assistance in his search for the daughter of the landlord of the Golden Anchor.

He was rather surprised to find himself in a narrow street, with none but very dingy-looking old brick buildings in sight, but he had no time to reflect why the Police Head-quarters should be located in such a sorry-looking locality, for the carriage-door was opened, and by a very different looking man from the one who had taken his carpet-bag and had, he supposed, driven the coach. The man who opened the door with a jerk, was short, thick-set, bull-necked, crop-haired, bull-terrier looking in every respect.

"Here we are, boss!" said he. "Tumble out. Five dollars fare—hand her out, and let me slide. My boss told me to git back afore the next boat was in!"

"Where's my carpet-bag—where's the driver?" asked the old Captain, hastily.

"I'm the driver, boss; there's where you wanted to go to. Hand out that five!"

And with the heavy butt of a very short whip the driver pointed to a house in front of him, and held out his other huge, dirty paw for the money he demanded.

"You're not the driver I started with. He had my carpet-bag! Where is he?" cried Hadley, angrily.

"Looker here, boss, I am the driver you started with, and here's where you wanted to go! That's all I've got to say. I don't know nothin' of yer carpet-bags! Now fork out that five, or you and me are bound to have a muss."

"Not a penny till I know where my carpet-bag is!" said Hadley, now alarmed lest it was lost altogether. "The man said he'd take it or the box."

"Was it valuable, boss?" asked the driver glancing, uneasily, up the street, down which

two men in blue shirts, wearing bright buttons, and shields on their breasts, were slowly coming. "If 'twas, I'll go back and look for it!"

And in an instant he sprung to the coach-box, and put the whip to his horses. In another moment he was around the corner and out of sight, not having waited for his five-dollar fare.

The poor old Captain was utterly stupefied for the moment, but, supposing he was at the "Head-quarters" of the Police, where he might get relief in his trouble, he turned to look at the building which the driver had pointed to.

It was a two-story, dirty-looking brick house, the street-door was closed, and he could see nothing to indicate police-business there. The two front windows had dingy red curtains over them, so that he could not see any sign of life inside. He was about to knock at the door, when one of the blue-coated gentlemen just alluded to touched him on the shoulder and said:

"Friend, you look like a stranger in the city. If you value your own safety, I'd advise you to keep out of that crib. Men who go in there with money never come out with it."

"Why, isn't it the Police Head-quarters?" asked Hadley, recognizing in the dress of the man who spoke to him a similarity with the uniform of his late official friend in Boston.

"The Police Head-quarters? Why, man, you don't look as if you'd been drinking, but you talk so. That is as hard a den for thieves as there is in this city."

"Thieves? Then I've lost my carpet bag and five hundred dollars of poor Rosy's money," groaned the captain.

"In there?" asked the policeman, pointing to the red-curtained windows.

"No; the hackman who brought me here, or some one with him, has it. He just drove off; but he told me that this was the Police Head-quarters," said Hadley mournfully.

"You've been taken in and done for, I reckon," said the policeman, with a look of sympathy.

"Is there no help for it? is there no chance for me to recover my carpet-bag?" asked the old Captain, despairingly.

"Not much, if the regular cross-men have been afool of you," replied the officer.

"The first man, he that took the bag and put me in the coach, was rather pleasant in his ways; but the last one looked cross enough," said the Captain. "He was going to make me pay five dollars for my fare; but, all at once, he said he'd go back and look for my bag, and he jumped up and drove off before I could say a word, for I wanted to go with him."

"He saw us coming, I'll be bound, and it was time for him to slide," said the companion of the first policeman, who had stood quietly by, looking at Hadley with a smile. "You are precious green, old man," he added, "and the sooner you are out of New York the better. The sharps here will have you out of your clothes and draw all your sound teeth to sell to the dentists in less than twenty-four hours, if you stay."

"I never will leave until I have made the search I came for," said Hadley, more composed now. "If I have lost Rosy's money, I have some of my own left; and if I can get to a safe place, will send for more."

"I tell you you're too green to be here with money without you hire a special to go round and take care of you—a kind of he-nurse and guide, a guardian and protector. I know one you can get, if you have the dimes."

"I say, Mount, what does that woman want up there?"

This question came from the first policeman, who pointed up to the second story window of a house opposite; a house which had upon its door the usual sign of the New York cheap boarding-houses.

A pale face was looking down earnestly from that window; a thin hand was moving, as if to beckon to some one of the party. That face attracted Captain Hadley's attention, it seemed to him that he had seen it before. While he was still looking at it earnestly, a woman came hurrying across the street, and said:

"There's a sick woman in my house that thinks you're a friend of her father's; she says, if you are, that your name is Hadley."

"That is my name, and that's poor Betsy Hunt, or else I'm out of my reckoning," shouted the old captain.

And he hurried across the street, leaving the policemen to wonder whether he was crazy or not; for he, all at once, forgot their official presence and his loss in what he believed and hoped to be his discovery of her he sought for.

CHAPTER LI.

Days and nights of wild delirium and fever followed the hour when poor Betsy Hunt was placed in a comfortable room next her own, by Mrs. Hewlet, in the boarding-house of Mrs. Larkin. And, during these weary hours, the poor girl was watched over and tenderly nursed by Mrs. Hewlet, who, in Betsy's wild ravings, learned so much of the poor girl's story as to be satisfied that her own lawful husband had betrayed and ruined the unhappy recipient of her true, womanly charity. And though in her ravings Betsy so often called upon her "Frank, her dear Frank" to save her, that Mrs. Hewlet well knew a love for him was in that young and breaking heart which no time could efface, and death only could erase, she felt no jealousy. For how could she be jealous of the helpless one who had been deceived? How much more natural for her would it have been to cast from her own heart the love which she bore for him who was the father of her child, when for years she had felt his neglect, and now had proof of his unworthiness! But she could not. Love is a deep-rooted plant—Love, I mean, not passion, or the sentimentality of fledgeling misses and masters.

Betsy Hunt, at last, recovered her senses sufficiently to learn who had been so kind to her, and to tell all her pitiful story. And she was sitting by the window of her little chamber, talking with Mrs. Hewlet about her return to her native village, which had been decided on as soon as she was able to travel, when the carriage which contained Captain Hadley drove up before the opposite house.

There was nothing in the mere stopping of the carriage to attract her attention; but after it moved off, and she saw an old man standing in apparent bewilderment there, she glanced at his face, and, in an instant, it flashed upon her mind that she had seen that face before, and in happier days. Who it was, she could not call to mind, for her brain was yet weak from her long illness. She trembled, however, and Mrs. Hewlet noticed and asked, in her usual kind tone, for the cause of her agitation.

"There, there," said Betsy, pointing across the street, "is some one from Lidgetown. I know the face; I know the form; but I am dizzy, and cannot think who it is."

"He looks like a sea-faring man. His face is weather-bronzed, and his gray hair curls thick about his temples," says Mrs. Hewlet.

"I think it is Captain Hadley. Oh! perhaps father has sent him to look after me. Do find out if it is Captain Hadley, good Mrs. Hewlet. If he would only look up, he would know me."

And Betsy waved her hand and tried to call his name; but her voice was weak, and she knew she could not make him hear.

"I will go and send Mrs. Larkin over to call him in, if he is really the man you think he is," said Mrs. Hewlet, leaving the room.

In three or four minutes more, Betsy Hunt was weeping like a child on the breast of the good old Captain, who cared nothing for all his city troubles, since he had found the object of his search.

And now, reader, we will leave Captain Hadley, and Betsy, and Mrs. Hewlet in company to arrange a little plot of their own, founded upon the information which he gave them of matters in Lidgetown; and, meanwhile, we will go there on Fancy's rapid car, and see for ourselves how matters progress.

CHAPTER LII.

In the Cottage in the Pines, just three weeks after the departure of Captain Hadley upon the mission known only to himself and Rosalette, Mr. Drummond and his daughter were passing a wildly-sorrowful hour.

Maddened by the constant rebuffs and the fearless annoyances which he received at the hands of Rosalette, Captain Hewlet had demanded a positive decision on the part of both father and daughter in regard to his matrimonial project.

"One hour I give you, Mr. Drummond, to consult with the fair friend who seems to delight in tormenting the heart which is madly devoted to her—one hour, sir, and then I come to ask whether or not her marriage and mine shall be celebrated on the morrow. I make no threats now—I have done threatening. But you know well what I can do: you ought to know whether a wronged and desperate man will refrain from using the means he has in his power to bring the refractory to their senses."

Those were his words; and after uttering

them he took out his watch, glanced at the time, and added:

"I will go and take a walk toward the seashore, where the breeze will cool my rather feverish brow—in an hour I will return to know my fate, or decide yours!"

"What does he mean, father? Will you never explain to me what terrible power that bad, bad man holds over you?" cried Rosalette.

"Child, I cannot—dare not. I am in his power; but I will dare the worst! You shall not suffer for me. My decision is already made—he can but ruin me. All I dread is—I cannot speak it child; but you will try not to hate me when I am gone? I will not survive the disgrace he threatens. For your sake, and for that of my brave boy, I would have avoided what must come; but I can no longer struggle against that fiend in human shape."

And the old man, grown weak with trouble, bowed his head and wept like a child.

"Father—dear father," sobbed Rosalette, "since I may not know what his power over you is—I will destroy it. He has said, over and over, that, my hand once his, he would cease to persecute you. He shall have that hand; but he will curse the hour which makes it his. Though I become Hewlet's wife—"

"Which you will never be, Rosy—which you never will be, Rosy Drummond!" cried a hearty, happy voice at the door; and old Captain Hadley entered the room.

Mr. Drummond only raised his head, and gazed on the Captain with a look of surprise; but Rosalette rushed toward him, and cried:

"Have you succeeded, dear Captain Hadley?"

"Yes, Rosy, yes!"

"Have you found her? and is all as I suspected?"

"Yes—only worse for him. I have found poor Betsy, who was ruined by a mock-marriage with the villain you just named as I came in. And I also found his real wife and his child, who is named Rosy, too. And they are now near the village, ready to act their part in exposing and punishing the villain; for I have formed a plan to lay him out cold in his games, and to make him known as he is. I would have him in the State Prison if I had my way; but his poor, wronged wife, woman-like, pleads that his punishment may go no further than his public exposure."

"What does all this mean?" asked Mr. Drummond, who had been listening amazedly to the conversation between his daughter and the old Captain.

"This, my father: that now the tables are turned," replied Rosalette, "Captain Hewlet may threaten now, and yet we will laugh at him. For we hold him in our power. He would marry me to-morrow, and yet he has a living wife near by to comfort him; and his victim, poor Betsy Hunt, is also close by, whose oath would send him to prison for more years than he ought to live."

"But all this does not relieve me," said Mr. Drummond, sadly. "Still he will hold the sword above my head."

"He will be glad to withdraw that sword if we work our plans aright," said Rosy. "I shall consent to marrying him when he comes in—will name the hour to-morrow myself for the ceremony to take place, and shall depend upon you, Captain Hadley, bringing his true wife before him at the moment when the minister asks if there is any one present who shall say aught against the marriage. For that, I believe, is always a part of the matrimonial service. Let his victim also appear to confront him, and if, after that, Frank Hewlet stays long in these parts to persecute my poor father, I am mistaken both in him and the people of our village."

"Your plan is good, and only goes a little ahead of the one I and his wife had formed to bring him out before the world," said Hadley. "I will aid you, and be on hand with those under my convoy at any hour you name."

"Let it be at noon at the village church, then," said Rosalette. "And now, Captain Hadley, with only my poor thanks at this moment for a reward, hurry away, for I expect the wretch back every moment, and I do not wish him to see you."

"Bless you, girl—I'll obey orders from you as long as I live. But I've a long story to tell you if I ever get time. I've seen all of cities want to; and your five hundred dollars have gone to—"

"Never mind now, dear Captain—never mind,

now. Hewlet will be here very soon, and I wish to be ready for him."

"All right, Rosy—good night, Mr. Drummond—I'll be on hand to-morrow, safe and sound, convoy and all."

And the honest old skipper hurried away, and not any too soon; for Rosalette only had time to caution her father how to act in their interview with Hewlet, when the latter appeared.

Rosalette, who a moment before had looked triumphantly happy, now assumed a look of sullen indifference, while Mr. Drummond looked even as he yet felt, desperately unhappy; for he could not believe that the villain's hold upon him could be thrown off so easily as Rosalette imagined.

"Well, Mr. Drummond, the hour is up!" said Hewlet. "You have had time to deliberate. Is your resolve formed?"

Mr. Drummond choked with the answer which Rosalette had told him to give. He could not speak as she had hidden him do. She saw that she must utter the words herself. And in a quietly sarcastic tone she did so.

"To save my poor father from persecution, unmanly as it is cruel, I have made up my mind to become your victim, under the name of wife!"

"Ah! I thought you'd come to terms when I left but one alternative," said Hewlet, triumphantly.

"Hark a moment," said Rosalette. "There are generally conditions in most articles of capitulation."

"Well, fair captive; name what conditions you ask, and, as a generous conqueror, I will consider the propriety of granting them."

"First, sir, that, having consented to become your wife, I name the hour and place where the ceremony of enslavement is to take place."

"Oh! I agree to that, provided the hour is not very far distant. As to the place, it makes no difference—a church or a grave-yard were alike, so long as you become mine!"

"I have no thought of grave-yards at present, sir. You may think of them for your own use as soon as you like. For I am candid to say, that I had rather be a widow, than a wife to Satan's youngest son. To-morrow, at noon, I will enter the village church, and there you may claim me as your bride, unless some other lady claims you before the hour which is to make me yours!"

"Lady, you are kind to name such an early hour. You may depend upon it, I will be punctual," said Hewlet, bowing. Then turning to Mr. Drummond, who sat gloomily looking at Rosalette, as if studying whether she could indeed succeed in saving him from the doom he dreaded, Hewlet asked:

"Is your free consent given to this matter? Mr. Drummond?"

"My consent is given; you know best if it be free or not. And now leave us in our misery to have a few hours of peace," replied Mr. Drummond, sternly.

"I will do so, sir. I will go to prepare for the bridal, for our old friends in the village deserve a feast on such a happy occasion!"

Though sarcastic in tone, his words fell lightly on the ear of Rosalette, who could hardly hide from him the anticipation of a triumph which would darken his joy. And as he bowed low, ere he turned to go, and said: "Pleasant dreams, fair betrothed!" Her answering smile was ominous of evil, for it was quiet, and the words with it: "I hope you will dream of the once fair and pure daughter of Nehemiah Hunt. Let not her ghost disturb those dreams!"

His brow darkened, and a curse rose to his lips, but he did not utter it then. He only muttered so low that she could not hear him:

"Once mine, daughter of a prouder house than this though you be, I'll tame you!"

CHAPTER LIII.

Nehemiah Hunt, our host of the Golden Anchor, was, as usual, smoking his pipe in his big arm-chair on the stoop of the tavern, when Frank Hewlet came down from the Cottage in the Pines, after his last interview with the Drummonds, as described in the last chapter.

Napoleon, who was seldom at rest, was now actually sitting down on the lower step of the same porch, smoking a cigar; for since his acquisition of a watch, he had endeavored to learn all the qualifications of a gentleman, of which he supposed cigar-smoking to be one.

Hewlet, as he ascended the steps, whistling a merry air, attracted the attention of Nehemiah.

for latterly the Captain had been sullen and morose, and seldom paused to exchange a word with the landlord, ere he sought the solitude of his chamber, where, with his bottle and cigars, he found the only solace which his dark and guilty soul could know.

"How goes it to-night, friend Hunt; how goes it to-night with you?" said Hewlet now, as he paused by the landlord's chair.

"Fairly, Cap'n; fairly. But merrily with you, I should think," replied the landlord. "You've had the blues for a'most a month past, but you seem to have the brights to-night."

"Well, I have, and with some reason. I have made up my mind to quit worrying about past and lost love, and to make amends for it by taking Miss Drummond for better or worse to-morrow. I'm to be married at noon, in the church, and you must be there to see it."

"Jehosaphat! Won't I? Why, all the village that can walk, creep, or crawl, will be there!" replied the landlord. And then he shouted in a louder tone than he had used since he lost his poor Betsy: "Napoleon!"

"Wall, here I be, right under your nose, Nehemiah. What's the use o' rousing the marmalades outside o' the harbor by hollerin' so loud," answered Napoleon, whose dignity had grown considerably since he had learned to smoke cigars.

"Go and get some eggs, right off, straight, and immediately. I'm going to make as many noggs to-night as ev'rybody wants, free, gratis, and for nothin'!" cried Nehemiah, still in a loud key.

"Somethin's broke loose, or else you've been improvin' on my stun-fences, I guess," said Napoleon, as he deliberately rose to obey the order, and started off with an extra snuffle or two.

"Married to-morrow, Cap'n? Don't it make you feel kind o' bad to think of it. It's a good while since I took my Debby for worsen or better, but yet I can remember that I felt awful scary all the day before. And when we stood up in Friends' meetin'—for we were sort o' Quakerish in them days—I felt more like an icicle than a man, and if one of the elders hadn't a nudged me, I'd have sat down ag'in without sayin' anythin'. The spirit didn't move me in them days as it does now, when I can make my own noggs, and owe nobody nothin'. But, come in, Cap'n, and have a stun-fence, while Napoleon is after eggs. Goin' to have a time after you are married, eh?"

"Yes; the best dinner that can be got up in Ledge-town."

"Up to the Cottage in the Pines, I s'pose."

"No, friend Nehemiah. Right here in your own house, and it must be got up regardless of expense. Hire all the help you need; buy all the good things you can, and my purse shall pay for all. I shall not stand back for a few dollars, when I marry the heiress of Tom Drummond!"

"Hooray for you, Cap'n. If I hadn't my eye on the man that is to be the next President, I'd vote to have you nominated. But come in, Cap'n. I can't wait for eggs now."

And the landlord moved behind his bar with unusual agility, and proceeded to concoct a couple of choice beverages, which were soon disposed of by himself and Hewlet.

And, just as their glasses were emptied, Napoleon came in with a basket of eggs.

"Napoleon!" cried the landlord, loud enough to have been heard a half mile off. "I want you to go and buy all the turkeys you can get in the village!"

"That isn't more'n a dozen!" said Napoleon.

"And the geese, and the ducks, and the chickens! And I want two of my own sheep butchered, and a calf—Peaked-nosed Haight!"

"Want him butchered? Why what'll the Widder Bombasine do if he's killed?"

"I didn't say I wanted him killed. You didn't hear me out. I meant that Peaked-nosed Haight would help you do the chores and all that. Tell Barney, the butcher, I want two rousin' rounds of beef, and go to old Greeley's for punkins and garden sass. I'm agoin' to have the grandest dinner to-morrow that ever was heard of in Ledge-town!"

"Why, it isn't the Fourth of July by a darned sight."

"I know that, you snuffle-nosed gander! But the Cap'n is goin' to be married, and gives his weddin'-dinner here. Now, do you understand?"

"Look at that, and see if you understand any better!" cried Hewlet, as he handed Steve a five-dollar gold piece.

"Yes, I see right through it now, Cap'n!"

cried Steve, as he raised the piece of gold to his eye. "And I'll ransack the town to get up everythin' that's good, you'd better believe. If Nehemiah paid like you, Cap'n, he'd go to Congress. He's got his good p'int, though—that he has, but it's only me that knows 'em—he never let's 'em out afore folks."

"Well, be stirrin', Napoleon, be stirrin'—you'll have to tell Ase Avery to come and help tend bar. I s'pose he'll come if he does belong to church, so long as he don't have to drink nothin' himself! And hurry up things—hurry things—you'll have to work all night, I s'pose."

"Won't there be any dancin', Cap'n?" asked Napoleon, who was lighting a cigar, notwithstanding his hurry.

"Perhaps so—to-morrow will be time enough to see about that," said Hewlet, with a laugh. And he turned to go to his chamber to pass a gleeful evening.

Ah, little did he dream that, but a few miles away, a neglected and wronged wife, and a ruined and broken-hearted girl waited only for the morrow to darken the festivities which he anticipated—to dash the triumphal cup of villainous bliss from his hand ere it reached his lips.

CHAPTER LIV.

In a village like Ledge-town, news travels fast—there is no need of a public press to spread local information. It was known long before the hour of noon that Captain Frank Hewlet was to be married at that hour in the village-church. And as the Captain's real villainy was yet utterly unknown there, and he had ever been free and liberal, he had many friends, and few who were not such.

The "Golden Anchor" had never before been more crowded. Nehemiah was in his glory. His tongue and his hands were both busy, and money rolled into his drawers faster than it ever had before. The whole population seemed to look upon it as a festal day, and to enjoy it accordingly.

Hewlet was exhilarant—every one he met, of course, congratulated him. Yet, as the hour of noon approached, he began to show some signs nervousness. He had sailed early at the Cottage in the Pines, where he had been received with chilling reserve by Rosalette, who would not listen to his accompanying her and her bridal cortege from her father's house.

"I told you last night," said she, "that at noon, precisely, I would enter the church, ready for the occasion. There you can meet me—until then, I beg to be relieved from your presence."

"But I insist—" he commenced to say.

"Sir, your authority will commence when I am your wife."

"Very well, Miss Rosalette; until that hour I will not exert my 'authority'. But, then, you may rest assured you shall be made to obey my wishes."

"Very well, gallant Sir—very well! You know my wishes—I shall expect your subservience to them. At noon, precisely, I will enter the church in fitting attire for the occasion. Doubtless you have secured the attendance of Mr. Noble."

"Of course, fair lady; a marriage without a minister would be singular."

"Yet I have heard of such marriages," she said, quietly.

He started, turned pale, and looked earnestly at her. Could it be possible that she could have learned of his mock-marriage with Betsy Hunt? But in the quiet of her face he could not read that she knew of that villainy.

"Ours will be no mock-marriage, at any rate," said he, as he turned from her and went back to the village, pondering over her words.

It wanted yet a half-hour of noon, when the little church was far better filled than it ever had been under the gifted ministry of the good Mr. Noble. In truth, almost "all the village", to use a common term, was there. Nervous and impatient, Frank Hewlet, attired in his best apparel, and wearing more jewelry than a gentleman would ever appear in, waited on the tavern porch until he saw the family-carriage of Mr. Drummond descending the hill toward the church.

Then he hastened to be at the door of the holy edifice ready to assist Rosalette to alight, and to escort her into the church. He arrived but a moment before the carriage, and opening the door, found both Rosalette and her father, attired in deep black.

"I told you, Sir, that I would be here at noon, and also attired suitably for the occasion," said

Rosalette, as she descended from the carriage without appearing to see the hand which he extended to assist her.

"It matters not to me how you are dressed, so that you are here," said he. And he tried to smile, but a chill seemed to freeze the smile ere it appeared.

"Father, your arm, until I am before the altar! This man has no right to touch me yet," continued Rosalette. And, taking her father's arm, she moved forward with the haughty dignity of a queen rather than with the timid tread of a bride.

The people seemed amazed at the sable color of her bridal-dress, but made way respectfully as she passed along; for none could be more loved than she. Yet they wondered—wondered, too, why Hewlet should look so pale and gloomy, while her face looked fairer, brighter than usual, in strange contrast with her sable robes.

Hewlet walked on by her side until they reached the spot where the minister stood prepared to perform his part.

He looked surprised when he saw how Miss Drummond was robed; but it was not for him to question the propriety of her dress. As Hewlet stood before him, the minister asked of him if he was ready for the ceremony.

Hewlet promptly replied in the affirmative.

"Are you also ready, Miss Drummond?" asked the minister.

Rosalette cast a quick glance to her right, where good old Captain Hadley stood with two closely-veiled females, by his side—then at the portly form of Nehemiah Hunt, near them; and giving her father an assuring look, replied that she was.

The minister then raising his voice, said:

"It is a usual form with our church before we commence the holy ceremony for which we are now assembled, to ask if any one knoweth aught which can of right debar these holy proceedings. If any one knoweth cause that this ceremony should not proceed, let him or her now speak, or else hereafter hold their peace!"

"The cause which authorizes me to say the ceremony cannot proceed is here!" said Captain Hadley, in a firm voice; and he advanced with one of the veiled females by his side. She also led a young child by the hand—a sweet little thing, whose wandering eyes had not yet rested on the face of the man who now stood, pale and wild with rage, before the altar.

The lady unveiled, and stepping to the side of Hewlet, looked at the minister, and said:

"I, Sir, am the lawfully-wedded wife of Frank Hewlet. Here is my certificate!"

"It is false—false as hell! A conspiracy!" shouted Hewlet, as he snatched the certificate from the hands of his wife and tore it to atoms.

"Papa! papa! O my papa!" cried the little one whom the lady held by the hand; for now little Rosy, hearing her father's voice, looked up in his face.

"Frank, you cannot deny your child! Come with me from this place!" said his wife, in a pleading tone.

"Never! Woman, I know you not. Miss Drummond, shall this ceremony proceed, or shall I pronounce the doom of your father?" cried Hewlet.

"Ask the spirit of your victim, Betsy Hunt!" replied Rosalette.

And she raised the veil from the pale face of poor girl who now stood beside her.

"Are all the fiends of hell leagued against me?" groaned Hewlet, for the moment reeling under the shock. "Has that woman risen from the grave to damn me here before all men?"

"You will now excuse me, I hope, Captain Hewlet?" said Rosalette, bitterly. "I cannot marry a man who has one wife by a real marriage, and another by a mock-marriage."

"Betsy! Betsy! my own Betsy! where did you come from? Who took you from me?" cried Nehemiah Hunt, as he pushed up by the side of his daughter.

The poor girl could not reply, but pointing her hand toward Hewlet, she fell senseless into her father's arms.

"This is a vile conspiracy!" shouted Hewlet, who began to hear murmurs in the crowd, hitherto still from surprise. "It has been got up by Thomas Drummond to prevent my marriage with his daughter. But it shall not prevent his exposure. I here denounce him as a murderer, and a fugitive from justice for crimes committed years ago in England!"

Every eye was now turned toward Mr. Drummond. He stood, pale and trembling, looking as if he would sink into the earth if he could.

He would have fallen had not the arm of Rosalette sustained him.

"Courage, father!" she cried. "No one will believe the tale of the seducer of this poor girl—of a man whom Captain Hadley stands prepared to prove a gambler, thief, and libertine, and who would have been a bigamist had we not discovered his villainy in time. Courage, father—courage!"

"You call that man your father, girl?" shouted Hewlet, purple with rage. "He is not your father; but he is the murderer of your father! I have his secret, and the world shall have it. He was a smuggler on the English coast. His band was broken up and he punished through the efforts of a noble earl. In revenge, he stole that earl's daughter and fled to a cave by the sea-shore. The earl was close in pursuit of his child, and in that cave he overtook this man, who stands cowering before you, and there, by this man's hand, the noble earl was murdered. The murderer fled with this child and one of his own, by a wife who had died but a few days before, to this country. There he stands; and this haughty lady, whom I would have married and taken back to her ancestral home in England, is the child whom he stole. People, in Thomas Drummond, you see the convicted smuggler and the murderer of Earl Delorme?"

During all this time Rosalette had listened, even against her will, to a tale which made her soul shudder, and as Hewlet thundered out his last words, she turned to look at the face of him whom yet she wished to believe her father, for never had she known another. His face was ghastly white—but she had not time to note it when a ringing voice at the lower end of the church cried out:

"It is false. Thomas Drummond is no murderer. The Earl of Delorme is here!"

And the next instant a young and a well-known form to that people rushed through the crowd, and clasping Mr. Drummond in his arms, cried:

"Rouse up, my father! Rouse up! You are innocent of crime! The Earl of Delorme and his noble lady are here!"

"Ethelbert—Ethelbert—my son!" moaned Mr. Drummond; and he would have sunk again had not his boy upheld him.

And while he did so, a noble-looking elderly gentleman, with a lady leaning on his arm, pressed forward. They were dusty, and in traveling dress, and were evidently fresh arrivals in the village.

As the gentleman advanced, he seized Mr. Drummond by the hand and exclaimed:

"Your son has nobly performed a worthy service, and for his sake let all the past be forgotten. You did not wound me. I live, and am here to claim my long-lost child!"

"My lord, she is here, and worthy of your ancient race!" said Mr. Drummond, gathering strength as his son whispered words of cheer in his ear. And he pointed to Rosalette, who stood pale and trembling, looking from Mr. Drummond to those whom he announced as her parents. She had never known a mother; but now, when she looked at the sweet face of the lady before her, a past recollection seemed to come to her heart, and with a sob she threw herself into the arms which were already opened to receive her.

She felt that she had found a mother and a father, though she lost a father in the pale old man who yet trembled in the arms of the noble and gallant youth whom she had so long loved and regarded as a brother.

And what did Hewlet all this time? He stood at first like one stupefied, even in the fierceness of his anger, while he heard the Earl Delorme speak. Then gradually he seemed to see that he was foiled at every point—doomed to disgrace if not to punishment for his many crimes. The madness of despair seemed to seize upon him. His dark eyes glared upon those around him as would the eyes of a tiger about to spring upon his hunters.

"Frank—Frank—come with me!" cried his wife, in terror, for she had never seen him look so before.

"No—no—my place is hell—hell!" he shouted. And before a person could divine his purpose, he drew a dagger from beneath his vest, and buried it to the hilt in his heart. Then he drew it out, shook it aloft, and, with a wild laugh, sunk down a corpse before the altar of God, in the very spot where he had hoped to consummate one of his many crimes by wedding the daughter of Delorme.

Reader, the "Smuggler's Secret" is known to you, and my story is ended.

THE END.

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